

Ranboo's Interlude

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Ranboo's Interlude

by [teeth_eater](#)

Summary

Ranboo just wants to get good grades. Is that really too much to ask?

Apparently, yes, it is, because he is sent by his school to monitor their star pupil Tubbo's progress aboard the Sleepy Boi's Inc. He also couldn't be sent to a normal spaceship, no, he has to be on one with weird rules and shadows in windows and noises in the walls.

And the fact that the entire crew seems to hate his guts.

Notes

Well, here it is! A lot of people were wondering if Ranboo would make an appearance, and of course I couldn't leave out one of my favorite characters! I've never written him before, so I hope I did him justice.

no warnings, this one's going to be pretty lighthearted. If you havent read home again home again, this probably wont make much sense!

also, happy fourth to all my Americans out there. pray for the dead and fight for the living!

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Chapter I

Ranboo really *is* grateful for the opportunity to study at the Interspecies Communication Academy, he is. It's just that no one really seems to... *like him* here. He does his best to be charming and smart and friendly, but with his memory the way it is good grades have been far and few between. None of the professors seem particularly empathetic to his plight, fixing him with unimpressed stares when he stutters out that he had forgotten they had assigned homework yet again.

Thankfully, some of the professor's ire has been avoided since Tubbo had left. Ranboo hadn't known him well. Sure they had done a few projects together, and he seemed friendly, but there weren't many opportunities to make friends with the immense workload the academy assigned them. Tubbo was a star student, nearly fluent in Human, which was practically unheard of this far from Earth, so when he requested to study abroad, the school jumped at the opportunity, eager to have their star pupil represent them.

They probably also wanted his constant troublemaking to be someone else's problem, now that Ranboo thinks about it. Tubbo had been kicked out of Weapon Design and Manufacturing after nearly blowing up half the school, though being removed from the class did nothing to halt his destructive tendencies, and he could often be found sneaking into demonstrations.

Still, though, he had the top grades in the school, so he got away with a lot.

Ranboo, though, has been steadily tanking. This would be bad for any other student, of course, but this is especially troublesome for Ranboo. See, when a student is kicked out of ICA, they'll go home, naturally. Ranboo doesn't *have* a home, having lost his haunting a while back. Enderians aren't exactly... *family-oriented*, and Ranboo ended up being more of a hindrance than a help to his haunting, so he was booted.

He was lucky enough to earn a scholarship to ICA, though Ranboo is still of the opinion that it was given out of pity, but that can only last so long if he can't keep his grades up.

So, when he is pulled out of class by the intercom crackling to life and calling him down to the Dean's office, he can't help the nervous warble that crawls up his throat. The other

students pause in their notetaking, fixing him with unabashedly curious stares. Some giggle, making Ranboo duck his head and flush purple. The professor at the front of the room waves him out, and Ranboo scrambles for the door, holding his books close to his chest. He ducks his head to avoid hitting it on the doorframe and walks down the hallway as quickly as he can. If he's in trouble the last thing he wants is to keep the Dean waiting.

He pushes the door to the Dean's office open slowly, ducking his head and entering. The secretary stares at him blankly before gesturing him to the Dean's office. Ranboo ducks his head to avoid the eye contact she's trying to maintain. The Dean opens the door to their office, lighting up a bit when they see Ranboo.

"Ranboo," They say with a small smile. "Just the student I was looking for! Step into my office."

Ranboo complies, stepping into the office with a nervous smile. He sits in the chair across from the Dean's, folding his legs up and drawing his arms close to his body to fit better. He's sure he looks ridiculous, sitting in a chair made for someone half his size, but it's not like most of the accommodations in the school are made for enderians. He's pretty sure he's the only one of his kind enrolled, unless he forgot.

"What did you need to see me for, Mx. Coatilt?" Ranboo asks, trying to keep his voice light as he stares down at his hands.

"Do you remember Tubbo Underscore?" Mx. Coatilt asks. Ranboo blinks at them.

"Uh- yeah? Short? Apisaid with a thing for explosives?"

The Dean shudders a bit at the reminder.

"Yes... him." They clear their throat. "Well, he's been studying abroad for the past three months, as you may know, and the board has been informed that the vessel he's staying on hasn't been monitored. We value the safety of our students above all else, of course, and we'll need someone to do a full inspection of the ship to make sure it's up to code."

"And...you want me to do it?" Ranboo asks, a bit bewildered. If the ship isn't up to code why would they send another student to inspect it?

"Yes, I feel you're responsible enough to give an honest inspection." Mx. Coatilt says, standing and shuffling a stack of papers.

"I don't-" Ranboo is cut off by the Dean shoving the papers into his arms.

"Here's everything you'll need to know," They say dismissively. "You'll also be receiving a communicator connected to the school, use it to send in your reports."

Ranboo is ushered out of the room before he is able to say a word in protest.

"Good luck!" The Dean says cheerfully before slamming the door in his face. Ranboo gapes at the metal door, still processing what just happened. The secretary gives him a pitying look and goes back to typing up whatever it is she's writing.

Ranboo walks back to his dorm, still a bit rattled from the interaction. He very clearly doesn't have a choice in the matter, but he would really rather *not* do this. It seems wildly unsafe, anywhere that Tubbo would thrive would have to be. He collapses onto his bed, staring at the minimalistic decorating in his room. He... needs to pack? Wow, this is not how he was expecting his day to go. Like at *all* .

Ranboo flips over so he's staring at the ceiling, curling his knees up to his chest so his legs don't hang over the end of the bed.

People already don't like him here, he hasn't made a single friend. What are the chances people are going to like him wherever he's going? Ranboo flips back over, trying to take deep breaths so he doesn't spiral. It's not like he can say no to the Dean, he's already on thin ice with his grades. Maybe this is a blessing in disguise!

Ranboo sighs.

He *really* needs to stop lying to himself.

Ranboo is slated to leave the next day, so after frantically packing an hour before he was brought out to the dock, he waits anxiously for a security officer to knock on his door and bring him out to a ship that will take him wherever it is he's going.

They show up at 12 o'clock on the dot, exactly when they were scheduled. Well, never let it be said that the staff at ICA isn't punctual. Ranboo follows the guard to the docking bay, swallowing back the nervous chirps that build in his chest.

The security officer stops in front of a small ship, big enough for two people. Ranboo makes a face at the prospect of having to curl in on himself to fit for however long it takes to get to where the Sleepy Boi's Inc is docked. The ship has a strange name, Ranboo hopes that's the strangest thing about it. He could really use some normalcy.

There is already a pilot inside, beckoning Ranboo to sit, a bit impatiently. Ranboo complies after shoving his bags in the cargo hold, buckling himself in so if they crash he won't be *completely* pulverized. As expected, the ship is not nearly big enough for him to fit comfortably, but there *is* at least space for his tail to go, so that's nice.

"Uh, how- how long of a trip is it?" Ranboo asks, staring at his hands so he doesn't have to look at the pilot. The pilot gives him a side-eye and huffs a bit.

"Coupla' hours, kid. Sleep if you can." The pilot says before the engine rumbles to life. Ranboo doesn't sleep, and the pilot doesn't talk, which is a relief. Ranboo does *not* want to try to keep up a conversation right now.

Ranboo stares out the window at the passing streaks of white that are nearby stars, nervousness rising more and more as he thinks. A million terrible scenarios race through his head. They're all murderers, or pirates, or... *something* terrible. Ranboo does *not* want to do this.

Regardless of Ranboo's silent prayer that the school will call the pilot and say there's been a mistake, they meant to send an actual *employee* to examine the ship, not a random student, the pilot keeps moving forward, towards Calmyr, which is apparently where the Sleepy Boi's Inc is docked. Ranboo thinks it's a little far, there are certainly closer trading planets. When he asks the pilot about it, he just chuckles and says it's the closest planet the Sleppy Boi's Inc isn't banned from. Ranboo laughs nervously and returns to his pastime of staring unblinkingly out of the window.

They land on Calmyr not too long after that, throwing up orange dust under the ship's engine. Ranboo stumbles out of the ship, stretching out his numb legs and shaking his tail to get feeling back in it. The pilot is already walking towards a much larger ship, silver and

expensive-looking. Ranboo wonders what they do to have such a nice ship. He files away his pirate theory for a later date.

The ramp to what must be the Sleepy Boi's Inc lowers, revealing a small group standing at the top. Ranboo is a little taken aback at such a small crew manning such a large ship, but he supposes that's fewer people to pay at the end of the day. He steps forward, hesitantly.

"Good luck, kid." The pilot says, clapping him on the back. Ranboo stumbles forward, turning to look at the pilot, who is already walking back to his ship. Ranboo swallows nervously, turning his attention back to the crew of the Sleepy Boi's Inc. No turning back now.

Ranboo walks hesitantly up the ramp. None of the crew looks particularly happy to see him. He had read their files, of course, but had forgotten most of it, so he's not able to remember any of their names, which is going to be awkward later, but Ranboo will deal with that when the time comes.

The elytrian steps forward, and Ranboo recalls that this is their captain. He stands up a little straighter, before realizing how much that makes him tower over the captain and slouches back down again. The captain gives him a tight smile, flaring his wings a bit.

"Hello." He says shortly. "My name is Philza, I'm the captain. Welcome to the Sleepy Boi's Inc. We are so glad to have you here."

He's lying through his teeth. Ranboo swallows and smiles faintly.

"I'm Ranboo," He says. Phil blinks at him.

"We know," The phantling pipes up from the group, staring at him boredly. "We read your papers." Ranboo flushes at the reminder.

"Oh yeah," He says, the white side of his face bright purple. He stares down at his feet. "I-my memory isn't super good." He explains lamely. The phantling huffs disinterestedly and turns to whisper something to the piglin standing next to him. Ranboo feels like crying, this is so *humiliating* .

"Wil, don't be cold." Phil admonishes gently. Wil, Ranboo supposes that must be his name, rolls his eyes. Which Ranboo is pretty sure is a human gesture, if he's remembering his cultural classes properly. Weird. Well, maybe Ranboo got confused on which species did what. It certainly wouldn't be the first time it's happened.

"Fine, I'm Wilbur. I'm the scientist aboard the ship." He says, pinning Ranboo with a hard stare. "Don't go in my lab. There's dangerous shit in there."

Ranboo nods.

"I won't," He promises. He hopes the door is labeled, he really doesn't want to walk into Wilbur's lab on accident, especially since the phantling already doesn't seem to like him for whatever reason. Wilbur turns his head, seemingly finished with his introduction. There is a pause for a few seconds before Wilbur kicks the piglin in the leg. The piglin stumbles a bit and glares at Wilbur before turning to Ranboo, who stiffens under his gaze.

"I'm Technoblade," He says lowly. "I'm the security."

"Just you?" Ranboo asks hesitantly. Techno crosses his arms, stare unflinching.

"Just me." He confirms gruffly. Ranboo swallows.

"And you already know me," Tubbo says with a nervous laugh. His eyes keep darting around like he's waiting for something, making Ranboo frown. He had always seemed so relaxed at the Academy, what had changed?

"Yeah, we did- we did a project together earlier this year, right?" Ranboo confirms, praying he hadn't misremembered. Tubbo smiles thinly.

"Yeah, let's go inside." He says, turning towards the door of the ship. He seems to shout the last part, for some reason, making Ranboo flinch slightly. Weird.

The crew disperses once they get inside, Phil only pausing to point out where Ranboo will be sleeping on a map of the ship's interior. The captain hands him the paper and walks off to do whatever captains do in their free time. Ranboo stares down at the map for a few seconds, doing his best to commit it to memory, and starts down the hall.

Eventually, he finds the right door and presses the button next to it to open it. The door slides open, revealing a strangely... *lived-in* room. It doesn't really look like a guest room at all. Ranboo steps past the threshold, frowning in confusion. The crew didn't seem like the type to go out of their way to set up a room for him, and even if they had this is certainly an odd way of doing it. The bedsheets are rumpled like someone had been lying on top of them, there are papers scattered over the desk, and clothes hung over the back of a chair. Ranboo steps back, cursing himself when he realizes this is *definitely* not a guest room. There's no way it's any of the crew's though, he'd passed all of their rooms.

Well, regardless of who it belongs to, Ranboo is getting a distinct feeling that he's not supposed to be here. The enderian turns around and is face to face with Technoblade. Ranboo chirps in surprise and stumbles backward, catching himself on the chair.

"You're not supposed to be in here," Technoblade says gruffly, staring at Ranboo blankly. Ranboo stutters out an apology, scrambling back into the hallway. Techno follows him, shutting the door behind him after giving the room one last appraising look. He turns back to Ranboo with a cold expression, making the enderian shrink back slightly.

"Don't go back in there." Techno grumbles before shouldering past Ranboo and heading back towards the main body of the ship. Ranboo watches him go, mentally cursing himself for his blunder. He heads towards what must be his *actual* room, opening the door to reveal a much less occupied room, blank and impersonal. Ranboo stares in surprise at the bed. It's actually made for an enderian, not one of the multitudes of smaller species. That's... surprisingly nice of them.

Ranboo collapses onto his new bed, face-first into the pillow, taking a moment to relish in how comfortable it is to be able to stretch out for once. Ranboo takes a deep breath and screams into the pillow, hoping any sound not muffled by the pillow will be caught by the soundproofing in the walls. In a ship this fancy, they're sure to have it.

Ranboo flips onto his back, clutching his pillow to his chest. That was a decidedly terrible first impression, especially with Techno. Ranboo doesn't need to do any detective work here to see just how severe of a mistake he had made. An empty room, still left lived-in, even with no one in it, Techno's silent anger at Ranboo's intrusion. There had clearly been another crew member living on the Sleepy Boi's Inc who had died somehow. Probably pretty recently if the lack of dust in their room is any indication. That would also partially explain their coldness, they might think Ranboo is going to try replacing them. Ranboo sighs deeply, covering his face with his pillow.

He had never wished he was in class more than right now.

Chapter II

Chapter Summary

no warnings :D

ranboo and tubbo bond and wilbur is suspicious

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Ranboo rests his eyes until dinnertime, though he doesn't manage to fall asleep. How could he, in this new place where everyone seems to hate him? His comm crackles with static, startling him, and he flings the pillow away from himself and sits up, ready to defend himself.

Phil's voice calls through his comm, telling him it's time for dinner. Ranboo sighs in relief. Not a surprise attack, then. Phil had just gotten his code. Ranboo stands, holding his arms close to his body as he walks to his door as slowly as he dares. He does *not* want to eat dinner with the crew, but he's sure he has little choice in the matter. Ranboo walks through the halls, following the sounds of laughter and talking until he reaches a large, circular room with a table in the middle. The crew sits around it, though their boisterous conversation dies down into awkward silence when Ranboo steps through the door.

"I, uh-" Ranboo stutters, picking at his claws nervously. "Captain Philza called me in?" The small group stares at him for a few seconds before all four of them burst into laughter. Ranboo ducks his head, humiliated, and takes a step back to leave before Phil sticks a hand out to stop him.

"No, no, we're not laughing at you, mate," Phil says, mirth still heavy in his tone. "It's just that no one's called me Captian Philza since I bought this ship."

Ranboo smiles faintly, not really sure what he's supposed to say.

"Oh. What would you like to be called?" Ranboo asks unsteadily.

"Phil is fine, mate. Why don't you come sit down?"

Ranboo takes a few hesitant steps forward before taking a seat. He sits one chair away from Tubbo, there's already a plate there after all, and he doesn't know if anyone is going to be joining. Besides, if his theory about their dead crewmate is correct, the last thing he wants to do is sit in a seat saved in their honor.

A plate piled high with food is set in front of Ranboo, making him startle slightly. Wilbur is looking at him boredly.

"I checked and made sure everything was safe for enderians." He explains before returning to his seat to pick at his food, scrolling through the notifications on his comm rather than look at any of the crew.

The rest of them don't make for star conversationalists either, mind you. Phil keeps trying to make conversation by asking Ranboo questions, which Ranboo answers awkwardly, but Wilbur and Techno don't speak at all, and Tubbo seems distracted the entire time. The apisaid practically inhales his food and then rushes out a request to be excused from the table. Phil nods with a fond smile and Tubbo is off like a shot, wings practically a blur from how fast they're buzzing. Ranboo watches him go before turning back to his own meal, face heated. He had kind of hoped at least Tubbo would tolerate him, but he seems to be eager to leave the room at any opportunity.

"So," Wilbur says, making Ranboo jump hard enough to make his silverware clatter. "What classes do you take?" Wilbur asks, comm face down on the table. As innocuous the question seems, Wilbur is staring at him with a false casual air, but Ranboo can see the intensity thinly veiled in his wide eyes.

"Uh- I study like... Interplanetary Diplomacy?" Ranboo says, shifting uncomfortably in his chair.

"Yeah?" Wilbur says, biting a piece of meat off his fork in a strangely threatening manner. "Any science classes?" Ranboo swallows. He has a feeling that his answer to Wilbur's question is going to severely impact the coming days.

"Yes? We have to take them for the core curriculum." Ranboo replies nervously. Wilbur hums thoughtfully, cold eyes flicking to him.

"Any interest in biology, Ranboo?" Wilbur asks, something sinister in his voice, and then Techno is staring at him too. "The ICA is known for their studies on huma-"

There is a thud and Wilbur cuts himself off with a pained gasp, clutching his leg and shooting a glare at Phil, who is smiling tightly at Ranboo.

"Sorry about him," Phil says, pushing his plate away. "He's a bit possessive of his position as the head scientist, wouldn't want anyone taking his spot, you know," Phil says lightly. Wilbur opens his mouth and then there is another thud. Wilbur closes his mouth.

The table delves into silence once again, and Ranboo eats as fast as he physically can. All the food is delicious, which helps. The silence persists for a good two minutes.

"So how long are you staying?" Techno asks flatly, making Ranboo pause to stare at the piglin with a spoon halfway to his mouth.

"Uh-" He starts.

"Techno!" Phil admonishes. Techno shrugs, turning his attention back to Ranboo.

"Well?"

"Uh, I don't really... *know*?" Ranboo says, screwing up his face. "I kinda... was just told to come here and give my report? I'm sorry if I'm intruding."

"You're not intruding, mate," Phil assures, but Ranboo sees the way Wilbur rolls his eyes again and Techno huffs quietly, and it tells him that their captain is lying.

Ranboo doesn't try to make any conversation after that, just shovels food into his mouth. The moment his plate is clear he shoves it away from himself and asks to be excused from the table. Phil spreads his wings out slightly, an elytrian signal for 'hold on', and gestures for Ranboo to sit back down. The enderian does, albeit a bit hesitantly.

"Hold on, I wanna discuss rules with you," Phil says. Part of Ranboo relaxes at that. Once he actually *knows* the rules it'll be a lot easier to avoid the crewmate's ire.

"Right, well, first of all-" Phil begins, and Ranboo interrupts without really thinking about the fact that he's interrupting the *captain*. Oops.

"Wait, hold- hold on. Could you maybe... write it down? I can't- my memory isn't that good. I wouldn't want to forget something important."

"Sure. Techno would you get some paper and a pen please?" Phil asks, turning to Techno. The piglin huffs, not breaking eye contact with Ranboo as he stands, which *really* makes Ranboo twitchy. Techno leaves and Phil turns back to him.

"I'll write everything down afterward, but let me tell you the rules right now. If you forget anything you can just ask me and I'll remind you." Phil says with a tired smile. Wow, Ranboo

kind of wants to cry. This is the first time someone's actually took his memory problems seriously and actually offered to *help* him with accommodations. He mentally shakes off his sudden emotions, trying to put all his focus on Phil.

"So first of all, do *not* attempt to bring harm to any crew members. Tubbo and-" Phil pauses, blinking like he's realized something. "Tubbo tends to roughhouse, but he won't actually hurt you. You can take whatever food you'd like, but if you're not sure what it is ask Wilbur, he has a habit of leaving inedible things out where anyone can get them. Wouldn't want you to get sick. Don't go into the cockpit unless there is absolutely no other option. That means *everyone* is indisposed. Everyone here can drive the ship, do *not* try to drive it unless there is nobody else on board and you are in immediate danger."

Ranboo nods, all the rules seem pretty reasonable so far. Phil clears his throat, adjusting his wings behind him.

"Now, this one may seem a bit strange, but it's in place for a reason." Ah, perhaps Ranboo had spoken too soon. "Do not *ever* enter a room without knocking first. Ever." Phil says sternly, suddenly intense.

"Okay, I- I won't?" Ranboo says, bewildered.

"I mean it Ranboo. It seems odd, but it is so important." Phil reiterates. Ranboo nods his head obediently. "One more thing, I don't want you leaving your room at night."

Well, Ranboo supposes it's not *that* strange. The academy had curfews set in place, but with such a small crew it seems a bit arbitrary.

"Yes sir," Ranboo says, baring his neck in what he'd learned is the elytrian way of showing respect. Phil smiles a bit.

"No need for that, Ranboo. Just Phil will do, if you don't mind."

There is a piece of paper shoved into his hand by Wilbur, startling Ranboo. The enderian takes it, eyes flicking over it. Each of the rules is written down neatly, it's even *numbered*. Wilbur sits back down, resuming his endless scrolling on the cracked screen of his comm.

"Thank you," Ranboo says, a bit surprised at the kindness. Wilbur hums dismissively. Phil starts clearing the plates from the table, and Ranboo goes to help before being waved away by Phil.

"No, no, you can go ahead to your room. I'm sure you're tired after your trip." Phil says, crinkling the corners of his eyes. Ranboo smiles a bit sheepishly.

"A bit," He admits. A bit is understating it, he could fall asleep standing up. Which enderians can actually do, though he always wakes up with an aching back when he tries it. Phil dips his head, and Ranboo takes that as permission, so he turns and walks back to his room as fast as he can without being seen as rude. Once he breaks the crew's line of sight, he walks much faster, practically jetting in his eagerness to be somewhere where there are no judgemental stares. He passes the closed door that he had entered earlier, slowing slightly as he does. He hears what sounds like muffled speaking inside, and can't help but lean a little bit closer to hear.

It's Tubbo's voice, speaking softly.

"-miss you- dinner- brought you-" Ranboo misses most of the sentence, but flinches away from the door like it had burned him once he processes what he's hearing. Tubbo speaking to the empty air in an unused room. His face heats up, he *definitely* wasn't supposed to hear that. He should really stop eavesdropping.

Ranboo almost never sleeps easily. Sure, he *falls* asleep easily, but he's a painfully light sleeper, and almost never makes it a whole night without being snapped awake by a nightmare or a passing person or *something*.

So when he wakes up in the dead of night, it's not a huge surprise. He pauses, trying to figure out what had woken him. His heart is slow and steady, and there is no lingering panic clinging to his sleep-addled mind so that rules out a nightmare. A floorboard creaks near his door, and Ranboo's eyes shoot open. There it is.

His gaze flicks to the door, standing slightly open. It was definitely shut when Ranboo fell asleep, making the enderian shudder. There is a shape standing just behind the door, staring directly at Ranboo. He can see the glinting in their eyes in the dim light of a passing moon. They don't seem to realize he's awake. Ranboo wonders which of the crewmates this is, none of them seemed to be suspicious enough of him to watch him while he slept.

"Hello?" He voices cautiously. The figure jumps, stumbling backward slightly before ducking behind the door and darting off. Ranboo blinks in surprise at the strangeness of the interaction. He gets up to close the door, and as his hand brushes the knob, he has a terrible realization.

The figure was too tall to be any of the crewmates.

Terror floods him in waves and he stumbles away from the door in horror. Who the *heck* was at his door, who was watching him *sleep* ? He had read the files, and as poor as his memory is he would have remembered a *fifth member* being on file. Ranboo darts back to the bed, pulling his legs up close to him, filled with the irrational fear that something will grab him from under the bed. He wants to yell for Phil, but like heck is he going to scream for the ship's captain like a little kid who had a nightmare. No way. Phil has been the only person even remotely nice to him since he got here, and Ranboo would like to keep it that way, thank you very much.

Ranboo sits on his bed, wrapped in blankets, watching the door. He doesn't sleep that night.

When the lights come back on, signaling morning, Ranboo gets out of bed and walks to the kitchen, eyes wide and sleepy. The crew seems to take notice of his condition, a few of them shooting him confused looks as he walked into the room.

"Didn't sleep well, mate?" Phil asks sympathetically as he plates... some sort of bread dish. Ranboo makes a noise of agreement, too tired to really make conversation. "New place? Or is the bed not good for your height?"

"No, the bed is perfect!" Ranboo is quick to interject, not wanting the one comfortable bed he'd slept on since he'd been kicked from his haunting to be taken away so soon. "It's just-" Ranboo pauses, lie about nightmares on his tongue. Wait. The crew *definitely* needs to know what he saw. If he sounds crazy then that's at least better than getting killed by some stowaway while he sleeps. "I saw something weird last night," Ranboo says a bit timidly. Tubbo sits up a little straighter, eyes widening in worry.

"What did you see?" Wilbur asks, voice a bit too casual to be natural.

"I was sleeping, and something woke me up, but I couldn't tell what. When I looked at my door it was open, even though it definitely hadn't been when I fell asleep, and there was a person standing in the doorway. I said hello, but they ran as soon as they saw I was awake."

The room is silent for a few moments, before everyone bursts into clamoring speech at the same time. Ranboo's hands clap over his ears, sensitive hearing bringing all the noise up to a high-pitched buzz that attacks his brain like a swarm of angry wasps. The room falls silent again, and Ranboo tentatively takes his hands away from his ears.

"It was Techno," Tubbo says quickly, looking out the window and picking at his food. "He does his rounds at night to make sure everyone is okay, you know? Head security things, I guess." Tubbo laughs, a bit too loudly to be real, and then bites his lip. Ranboo furrows his brow, unsure.

"No, the person at my door was a few inches taller than Technoblade, I'm pretty sure." Ranboo refutes.

"He wears heels at night," Wilbur says flatly. Techno slowly turns his head to look at the phantling.

"Yes," Techno says slowly. "Good for... stab kicking."

"But-" Ranboo says, tail curling around his legs in confusion. "You... you have hooves?"

Techno stares blankly at him for a solid five seconds.

"Anyway-" Phil interrupts their impromptu stand-off by shouldering in between them, holding plates of food in each hand. "Enough talk, breakfast!"

The crewmates dig in, eager to avoid the line of conversation Ranboo had brought up. What with the way the subject is changed every time Ranboo brings up what he had seen, he figures it can't be that important and does his best to put the entire event out of his head.

After breakfast Ranboo heads back to his room to give his first report to the school. He picks up his communicator and sits at the desk he'd been provided. He presses record and clears his throat.

"This is Ranboo. The- the student you sent in to monitor the Sleepy Boi's Inc? The ship is... well, it's not- they aren't murderers." Ranboo starts, which really, just *how* low is the bar? "But it's a bit strange here. The rules are odd, like I have to knock before entering any rooms, and I saw someone at my door last night, but when I brought it up in the morning they all acted like I was crazy."

Ranboo worries his lip.

"They aren't...nice to me. Wilbur seems particularly cold, but- but at the same time, they do kind things? They make sure the food they make is edible for me, they even got a bed that fits

me. They don't get mad when I forget things. It's... strange."

Ranboo sighs, letting his head fall forward to thump onto the desk. He's terrible at giving reports. He deletes the recording.

"This is Ranboo reporting in from the Sleepy Boi's Inc," He tries again, trying to keep all emotion out of his tone. "All clear. No danger. Just- just a cargo ship trying to get by. Tubbo is safe. I- I'm safe." Ranboo swallows, unsure of the honesty of his last claim. "Ranboo, signing out."

Ranboo finishes the recording and listens back to it, deciding it's good enough and sending the audio file to the Dean. He sighs and leans back in his chair, tossing his comm onto his desk where it can't bother him anymore.

He has grand plans of hiding in his room the entire day, but those are swiftly ruined by a strange shuffling noise in the vents leading to his room. If there is some sort of feral animal in the walls, he wants nothing to do with it, so he heads out to the main body of the ship. Maybe he can actually get at least one other crewmate to like him. He spends half an hour pressing his ear to the wall to try and listen for whatever was shuffling around in there. Whatever it was, it's seemed to have gone to some other part of the ship by now, so Ranboo moves on.

He passes Wilbur's lab and smiles when he makes eye contact through the open door. Wilbur seems to be in a conversation with someone standing out of view, eyes shifting over to Ranboo briefly before turning his attention back to what he'd been doing. Wilbur double-takes at Ranboo and freezes, slamming the door to the lab shut. Ranboo blinks at the metal door, feeling a bit hurt at the immediate rejection. He hadn't even *said* anything yet.

Ranboo shuffles on, hoping his luck would be better with the other crewmates.

His lucky break comes when Tubbo skids around a corner at top speed, barreling into Ranboo and knocking both of them to the ground. Ranboo chirps in surprise, sparing a second to make sure the smaller alien isn't hurt. He isn't, but his eyes are wide and his entire front is caked in soot.

"What... happened?" Ranboo asks slowly, trying to take in the apisaids' condition. Tubbo gives him a slightly manic grin.

"Hide me!" Tubbo says quickly, and Ranboo's ears twitch when he hears Technoblade shouting angrily somewhere in the ship.

"What did you do?" Ranboo asks, standing up.

"You can teleport, right? Hide me!" Tubbo says, clinging onto Ranboo's wrist. The enderian is about to refuse when Technoblade appears at the end of the hall, just as soot-stained as Tubbo and ten times as furious, and his body acts of its own accord.

There is an otherworldly 'vwoop' and then Tubbo and Ranboo are both gone in a puff of purple sparks, leaving a confused Techno behind.

They reappear in a closet, which means that Ranboo is extraordinarily cramped. Tubbo cackles maniacally.

"That was amazing, Ranboo!" Tubbo crows, and Ranboo's residual terror from disobeying the head of security is temporarily put on hold to bask in the compliment.

"Uh, thanks?" Ranboo says, shifting a bit so that he can actually move his legs. "What happened back there, why was Techno so mad?"

"I wanted to try out my modified laser gun," Tubbo says dismissively. Ranboo stares at him.

"I take it didn't go well?" Ranboo says weakly. Tubbo smiles, all teeth, which Ranboo really didn't think apisoids did.

"No Ranboo, it went *perfectly*."

Ranboo lets Tubbo talk. It turns out great, he just needs to nod and make surprised noises while Tubbo explains the ins and outs of his grand modification to his gun. Or, actually. It was Techno's gun, he had just taken it without permission and didn't tell Techno he'd changed it. Hence the soot.

"I mean fuck, I wish Tommy had seen-" Tubbo's mouth snaps shut, eyes going wide.

"Who's Tommy?" Ranboo asks, tail flicking curiously. Tubbo stares at him, mouth slightly agape. After a full twenty seconds of silence, Ranboo realizes. Oh, Tommy must be the

owner of the empty room. Oh no. He's made yet another social blunder in his laundry list of mistakes.

"Oh... I'm sorry Tubbo." Ranboo says, flicking his ears apologetically. "Were you two close?"

Tubbo's face does something strange, going very blank for a second and then slowly changing to look like he was in pain.

"I'm gonna go," Tubbo says, standing and pushing open the door to the closet. It closes behind him, leaving Ranboo covering his face with his hands. He was so close to being friends with Tubbo, and he had to go and open fresh wounds.

Ranboo's sensitive hearing catches what sounds like Tubbo sobbing down the hall, and the enderian wilts further. Great, he had made Tubbo cry. He leans a little closer to the door, trying to make sure Tubbo's alright, and now that he's thinking about it, it kind of sounds like laughing. Weird. Maybe apisaid's cry differently than most.

Ranboo tells himself not to mention Tommy again, his death is clearly still a sore spot for everyone, Tubbo especially. He probably won't be able to remember, but maybe he can write it on his hand or something. He sighs deeply, trying to stretch out his numb legs in the cramped closet.

The door opens suddenly, flooding the small room with light, and Ranboo freezes, staring up at Technoblade who's looking down at him boredly. He's seemed to have gotten most of the soot off, so that's good at least.

"Where's the brat?" Techno asks tonelessly.

"I-I don't know?" Ranboo answers meekly. Techno rolls his eyes and wraps a hand around Ranboo's thin wrist, pulling him out of the closet. Ranboo mutters a thank you, but Techno doesn't respond, only marching off down the hall, presumably in search of Tubbo.

Ranboo sinks against the wall with a sigh, putting his head against his knees. He hates this. He wants to go home. He wants to go back to his haunting. They weren't kind to him either, but at least he knew where he would end up the next day.

There is a thud, making Ranboo's head shoots up in surprise. His eyes are drawn to a vent hatch swinging open on the ceiling, and something heavy moving inside.

Ranboo goes back to his room and tries not to think about it.

Chapter End Notes

HIIIII

leave a comment if you liked this chapter, it's a surefire way to get quicker updates!!

also, FANART PLUGGGGGG CHECK THIS SHIT OUT

[A SUPER CUTE TUBBO by discount-milo-thatch, who's been a follower of mine on tumblr like 5EVER](#)

[this ADORABLE ASS RANBOO DRAWING KISS KISS KISS its by thewildtiki and its so cute :D](#)

[this wilbur and tommy interaction that KILLED ME DEAD when i saw it by glatoma!!](#)

[this drawing by thunderbottle which fucking broke my heart when i saw it. it is a scene from home again home again but I'm putting it here so more people see it](#)

[THIS COMIC HERE omg the way they drew wlbur is so cute. i didn't notice the little frills under his eyes at first but its CANON NOW \(it is by ghostpajamas who is so fucking cool\)](#)

[and last but not least, this drawing of tommy and tubbo here by talkedjupiter78. its so cute. its like an old cartoon and i love it.](#)

Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

no warnings

also i forgot to mention but I'm writing ranboo as autistic bc he is near and dear to my heart <3

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Night rolls around again, following another awkward dinner with the rest of the crew. Thankfully there was less questioning this time and more of a tense silence that had fallen over the table.

Ranboo can't fall asleep, his eyes keep shooting to the door like it'll be open again, revealing a stranger standing in the hall, staring at him.

But he's tired, and after a few hours he opens his eyes to check the door again, and the lights are back on, simulating daylight. Ranboo blinks a couple of times, confused as he tries to reorient himself.

Oh, it's morning.

Well, it was nice that he wasn't killed in his sleep, but unfortunately, he now has to sit through another awkward meal with the crew. Ranboo gets out of bed with a groan, stretching out to his full height with a slight shudder. His horns brush the ceiling and he slouches back down again, a tinge of embarrassment at his height making his ears twitch back. He slinks out of the room and towards the dining hall. He ducks into the main bridge and then into the dining hall, hoping he wouldn't run into anyone on his way. He doesn't, thankfully, because he doesn't want to use up his social battery before he's even sat down at the table.

He sits one seat away from Tubbo, like he had yesterday, and the apisaid smiles at him, so Ranboo assumes he hasn't fucked up too badly yet. Ranboo smiles back, a bit tentatively.

"Good morning Ranboo," Phil says kindly, setting a bowl down in front of him.

"Good morning Captain," Ranboo says, wincing when he remembers that Phil asked him not to call him that. The elytrian just rolls his eyes with a smile, which... yeah that definitely isn't a typical gesture for his species. Maybe he got it from Wilbur?

Ranboo starts eating, trying not to think about it too hard. He is thankfully pulled out of his own mind when Tubbo strikes up a conversation.

"So, what do you think of the ship so far?" He asks cheerfully. Ranboo pauses, trying to figure out what Tubbo wants him to say. He probably wants Ranboo to say that he loves the ship, and it's great and he's super happy here.

None of that is true, but Ranboo's been silent too long and Tubbo is looking at him expectantly.

"It's big," Is what ends up coming out of his mouth, and Ranboo immediately wants to sink into the floor and disappear. That is certainly not what he was supposed to say. Tubbo blinks at him, expression twitching into concern.

"Yeah..." Tubbo says hesitantly. "But like, other than that?"

"It's good," Ranboo chokes out. "As long as you're safe it's all good." Tubbo hums in annoyance, wings fluttering slightly. He takes another bite of food.

"Gods, the ICA is so up its own ass," Tubbo complains, making Ranboo jump a bit at the sudden intensity in his voice. "They don't give a shit about their students unless they make them look good."

"They're not so bad," Ranboo defends quietly. Tubbo gives him a quizzical look, and Ranboo hurries to clarify. "They gave me a scholarship and a place to stay when I got kicked ou-" Ranboo snaps his mouth shut and goes back to eating. That was *way* too much information.

"You got kicked out?" Wilbur asks, and then there is another thud, making the phantling shriek indignantly. "Stop fucking hitting me!"

Tubbo is silent, even as the others clamor to ask questions.

"Ranboo," He says finally, voice curious. "Did you ever check the news on the ICA?"

"No?" Ranboo says, not looking up from his plate. "Or-or if I did I can't really... remember it."

"They were praised a bunch for taking in students with nowhere else to go, they put out pictures of you."

"I don't... when did they take my picture?" Ranboo asks, tail flicking in frustration as he tries to remember and comes up with nothing. Tubbo shoots Phil a look from across the table and mumbles something, though Ranboo isn't at the right angle to see what he's saying.

"Can we just eat breakfast?" Ranboo asks weakly. Tubbo opens his mouth, eyes sparkling with defiance, but Phil speaks before he's able to.

"Yes, Ranboo. Tubbo, let's drop this line of discussion for now." Phil says, voice kind, but something in his tone that tells them all that he wouldn't be taking no as an answer.

Tubbo's neck ruff fluffs up a bit in irritation, but he settles down quickly enough and goes back to eating with only a few dramatic complaints.

Once again he eats strangely fast, and is the first to excuse himself and dart off to wherever it is he goes during the day. Ranboo watches him go, grabbing a plate from the kitchen before darting off. Weird guy.

The meal wraps up pretty quickly after that. They mostly sit in silence, barring a few comments about the food. Wilbur gets up as soon as he's finished, thanking Phil for cooking and taking his plate to the sink. Techno is soon to follow, and then it's just Ranboo and Philza at the table.

Ranboo finishes eating but doesn't get up to leave, not sure if he's meant to ask for permission to go back to his room. Phil doesn't seem to notice his hesitance, he just stands with his own plate in his hands and walks to the kitchen. Ranboo follows suit, watching the captain intently so he can figure out what he's expected to do. Phil chuckles a bit when he sees Ranboo hovering, making the enderian jump a little in surprise.

"You wanna help with the dishes, mate?" Phil asks, eyes scrunching up in a smile. Ranboo hesitates. He doesn't know if Phil knows about enderian's... sensitivity to water, or if he'd care.

Ranboo smiles tightly and agrees, wishing he had the gloves he usually wore when dealing with water. Phil smiles too, nodding his head thankfully.

You rinse, I'll dry?" Phil suggests, and Ranboo has no choice but to do what Phil asks. He's the captain, after all.

If Phil notices his hesitation before sticking his hand in the sink he doesn't say anything. Ranboo finally bites the bullet and takes a deep breath before sticking his hand into the water to grab a plate. He bites down a whimper of pain as the water hisses against his sensitive skin. He yanks the plate out of the water and sets it on the counter before shaking his hand to get rid of most of the water and taking a few seconds to breathe through the pain.

Phil makes a horrified noise next to him, grabbing onto his wrist to pull his arm closer. Ranboo hisses reflexively at the pain, jaw unhinging, though he quickly snaps it shut once he realizes exactly *who* he's threat-displaying at. Phil lets go with a quiet apology, though his gaze doesn't leave the reddening burn on his arm.

"What happened? I didn't think the water was that hot!" Phil asks, sounding a bit panicked, already dragging Ranboo in the direction of the medbay by his good arm.

"Uh, no," Ranboo tries to explain quickly so he can get back to taking deep breaths.
"Enderians-"

Phil's wings snap open, barely missing Ranboo.

"Fuck me," He hisses, grip tightening on Ranboo's arms. "Enderians don't do water. Why didn't you say anything?"

"You needed help," Ranboo points out weakly. Phil turns around to glare at him, clicking chastisingly.

" *Bullshit* , what's the real reason?" Phil asks sternly. Ranboo caves instantly under the intense stare of the captain.

"You're- you're the *captain* !" Ranboo defends, stumbling a bit over his long legs as Phil pulls him along. "I *have* to do what you say!"

Phil takes a deep breath, trying to calm himself. Ranboo hopes the anger isn't directed at him.

"Ranboo, if something is going to hurt you, mentally or physically, you can always say no, okay?" Phil insists, staring the enderian down. Ranboo avoids the eye contact, but Phil doesn't seem to mind.

"Okay?" Phil repeats, and Ranboo realizes he wants an answer.

"Yes sir," Ranboo says, ears pushed back to his skull. Phil sighs deeply.

"Good enough," He mutters before continuing their impromptu trip to the medbay.

It takes a while, but Phil is able to dig up a burn cream that'll work on enderians. He says he'll pick up some stuff for Ranboo next time they're on-planet, and if he needs anything, to let him know.

Ranboo doesn't think he'll be sticking around long enough to need it, and he doesn't want to waste Phil's money, so he politely declines.

Phil has always been nice to him, even if most of it is pretend. While Phil's been fixing him up Ranboo tries to pretend that he's being nice because he actually likes Ranboo, and not just because he could get his ship fined if Ranboo says the wrong thing. It's nice to pretend.

The moment is broken, like it always is, when Ranboo messes up the conversation again. Phil has stopped talking, lapsing the room into a brief silence while he bandages Ranboo's hand, and the enderian's mind rushes to find something to say, to break the awkward silence.

"I like your necklace," Ranboo says quietly. Phil looks up, looking slightly surprised. His talon comes up to rest over the necklace gingerly, and he smiles fondly.

"Thanks," He says lifting it to the light so it gleams. "It was a gift from Tommy."

Ranboo closes his mouth shrinking into himself. Shoot, he *really* doesn't want to make Phil cry too.

"Sorry," Ranboo says, ducking his head. Phil frowns in confusion.

"Sorry for what?"

"Your loss," Ranboo clarifies, watching Phil's face. The confusion intensifies for a moment, before being smoothed over with realization. Then there is something like amusement, before his expression falls into sorrow, which is at least what Ranboo expected.

"Oh yes," Phil says after a moment, voice tinged with sadness. "Shame what happened to him."

Well, at least he seems open to talking about it, that's a marked improvement to Tubbo's reaction. Maybe Ranboo can actually get some answers now.

"Were you close?" Ranboo asks, repeating the question he'd asked Tubbo in the closet. Phil hums an affirmative, fondness warming his expression.

"He's a good kid," Phil says. Ranboo doesn't correct his tenses, that would be kind of a dick move on his part.

Elytrians are notoriously parental, probably why Phil makes such a good captain and likely part of the reason he's been so nice to Ranboo. Though if he had lost a crewmate... Ranboo doesn't even want to think of the pain he'd be going through. Ranboo doesn't know how long ago Tommy died, but it couldn't have been too long if the state of his room and the sensitivity Tubbo showed at the topic is any indication.

Regardless of how long ago he'd died, Phil must be hurting. Ranboo is likely doing no favors in that aspect, walking around stepping on people's toes and opening fresh wounds. It's not like he can avoid the topic, though, whoever Tommy is present around the entire ship. Phil's necklace, clothes strewn over the backs of chairs that smell like none of the other crewmates, an untouched, empty room. Whoever Tommy had been, he was an important part of the ship.

Ranboo wishes he could have met him.

Once Phil deems him healthy, he goes to finish the dishes on his own, shooting Ranboo a glare when the enderian tries to follow him to the kitchen. The captain tells him to rest, and as much as Ranboo would like to help, to pull some of his weight, he can't disobey the captain, even if Phil said he technically could.

He tries to sleep when he gets back to his room, if only to make the day go by faster so he can give his report and get this over with, get back to scrounging for barely passing grades and suffering the wrath of dissatisfied professors. The pain in his arm makes sleeping

impossible, though, so he heads back to the kitchen, just to see if there was any mess Phil had missed that he could clean up. Phil would like that, he bets. He knocks on the door to the kitchen, just like he had been told. He's been carrying the rule sheet in his pocket and rereading it every so often so he doesn't forget anything.

There is a crashing sound from inside the kitchen, but no one tells him to go away, so Ranboo opens the door. The kitchen is empty, but the door to the pantry is swinging slightly, like someone had just run through it. Ranboo purses his lips in unease, but he shakes his head. He doesn't think about it too hard, he has enough stuff to think about, the last thing he needs to worry about is... whatever that is.

There isn't much of a mess, Phil had done a good job, obviously. The only thing left out on the counters is a red mug half-filled with some dark liquid. Ranboo picks it up and goes to dump it out, but curiosity gets the better of him. He lifts it to his face and sniffs, scrunching up his nose at the bitter smell.

He lifts it to his mouth. He would hate to waste anything, especially in space where resources are hard to come by.

The lip of the mug barely touches his mouth before he hears a terrified shriek from the doorway, and all of a sudden the mug is being smacked out of his hand. It shatters on the floor, splashing the black liquid across the white tile of the kitchen. Ranboo turns to Wilbur, who is staring at Ranboo as though he may drop dead.

"Did you drink any of that?" Wilbur asks frantically, grabbing him by the arms.

"No?" Ranboo says, voice pitching up in distress. Wilbur shakes him.

"No as a question, or no as a statement?" Wilbur barks.

"No as a statement!" Ranboo answers, voice wobbling a bit from how hard he's being shaken. Wilbur lets go of him with a relieved sigh. Ranboo presses a hand to his head, trying to stave off the dizziness.

"What did I say about drinking random shit you find on the counter?" Wilbur asks, sounding annoyed all of a sudden. Ranboo wilts.

"I forgot..." Ranboo admits, shame curling in his gut like a weed. Wilbur takes a deep breath, lashing his tail.

"Alright, it's not your fault," Wilbur sighs. "It was a stupid place to leave it, anyway." He raises his voice like he's shouting to someone else on the ship. There is a thud from inside the

walls. Ranboo ignores it.

Wilbur gives him an appraising look, before grabbing him by the bad arm. Ranboo chirps in distress, and Wilbur lets go immediately, leaning down to look at his wound.

"Damn, what happened to you?" Wilbur asks.

"Water," Ranboo explains with a sigh.

"Oh yeah," Wilbur hums, taking his arm much more gently this time. "Enderians don't do water, right?"

Ranboo hums. Wilbur gives him another look.

"Look, I can't touch this stuff, my skin's pretty thin and it'd sink in and poison me if I tried to clean it up, so I'll leave it for someone else," Wilbur explains, walking towards the living quarters and gesturing for Ranboo to follow.

"But-what- what if someone else touches it?" Ranboo sputters, distressed. "You should at least tell someone!"

Wilbur waves his tail dismissively.

"It's cool, Ranboo, you worry too much." Ranboo frowns. There's no disputing that, is there? Ranboo is of the opinion that Wilbur worries too *little*, but like heck is he going to back sass to the person that's intimidated him the most since he's showed up.

Well, Technoblade actually intimidated him the-

No, no it's definitely Tubbo.

Wilbur seems to notice him spacing out and gestures him to follow a bit more forcefully. Ranboo stumbles a bit, but tries to match pace with Wilbur as he heads towards the bedrooms.

"Where are we going?" Ranboo asks, a bit nervously. If he's going to be thrown out of the airlock he at least wants to get his things. Wilbur chuckles, which isn't helping his whole mad-scientist thing he's got going on, and it certainly doesn't help with Ranboo's nerves.

"I've got something for you," Wilbur says vaguely. Ranboo frowns.

"That doesn't narrow it down."

Wilbur ignores him, throwing the door to his room open. Ranboo's frown deepens, how come *Wilbur* doesn't have to knock before going into rooms. Wilbur pays no attention to Ranboo's internal plight, only gestures for Ranboo to follow him inside, more excitedly than Ranboo expected of him.

It's... a nice room. Much cozier than Ranboo expected. The metal walls are papered with posters of musicians from various planets. Ranboo recognizes a couple of them. There is a polivive leaning against a wall too, clearly well used, but still in good condition.

"I didn't know you played," Ranboo says quietly. Wilbur perks up from where he had been rummaging around in his desk drawers. He walks to the polivive and picks it up, throwing himself onto his bed and pulling it onto his lap to hold comfortably.

"Do you have any requests?" Wilbur asks with a sharp-toothed smile. Ranboo doesn't have the heart to tell him that music has long since been looked down upon on his home planet. With how much music seems to mean to him, it may break his heart.

"You pick," Ranboo says instead, settling in Wilbur's desk chair. Wilbur smiles broader and begins to pluck out a tune.

Wilbur's good at playing, that much is obvious, and though Ranboo still gets a little jolt of terror every few minutes that he'll be caught listening to music.

After about half an hour, Wilbur seems to be done.

"What did you think?" He asks, putting his polivive back against the wall. Ranboo chirps thoughtfully.

"It was...nice. Very pretty." He decides on. Wilbur's ears prick up.

"Thanks, I've only been working on them for a few days, but they're coming along."

"You wrote those?" Ranboo asks, curious. Wilbur laughs lightly.

"Yeah," He says shortly, before going back to rummaging through his desk. "You know, I got kicked out too." He says, a bit too casually. Ranboo jolts.

"You did?"

"Yup, didn't like what I did, wanted me to stay home. What got you?" Wilbur asks. Ranboo hesitates, but he supposes there's no harm in telling him if Wilbur *also* got kicked out.

"I kept getting lost while hunting, I wasn't useful enough to warrant keeping around. It made sense." Ranboo says, defensiveness for his hauntings choices rising up in him. Wilbur rolls his eyes again.

"A little harsh for not being good at hunting," Wilbur hums.

Ranboo opens his mouth to argue, to defend his haunting the way he had been raised to, but is interrupted when Wilbur pulls something out of his desk with a short, victorious noise.

"Found it!" He crows, holding out the thing to Ranboo. The enderian blinks at Wilbur, not sure what he wants Ranboo to do. Wilbur shakes the book a little, and Ranboo hesitantly reaches out to take it. Wilbur doesn't snatch it back, so Ranboo assumes he's done the right thing.

It's beautiful, leather-bound with a green gem inlaid in the latch. Ranboo looks up at Wilbur quizzically.

"What's this?" He asks, still waiting for the other shoe to drop. Wilbur sits next to him on the bed and opens the book sitting in Ranboo's hands. The pages are all blank.

"A journal," Wilbur explains easily. "You said you forget things easily, so now when something happens you can write it down. That way you won't forget rules."

Ranboo flushes at the reminder of his mistake in the kitchen.

"I'm still sorry about that," He mutters. Wilbur rolls his eyes again. "Is it for me?"

"No, it's for the head of the Galactic Council," Wilbur drawls. Ranboo tries to put the book down, he's not really sure he wants to risk damaging something if it's going to the council. Wilbur catches his wrist.

"I was being sarcastic." He explains. Ranboo's ears flick back, embarrassed.

"Oh."

Back in his room, Ranboo sits at his desk and writes. He had found a pen in one of the drawers in his room, and he intends to make use of it.

'Day Two,' Ranboo writes in the sharp script of his own tongue. 'Wilbur was nice. Played the polivive for me and gave me this journal. Do not drink random cups of black liquid.'

Ranboo sets the pen down with a sigh. That's all he can really recall, the rest is fog. Tomorrow he'll write down things as they happen, then he might actually be able to recall entire days. Isn't that a thought?

His eyes land on a scrap of paper sitting on his dresser. It reads: *give the report to school!*

Ranboo realizes with horror that he had completely forgotten, he was supposed to send in his report *half an hour* ago! He scrambles for his communicator and presses record.

"This is Ranboo of the ICA," He starts. He really should write a script or something. "The ship is secure. I believe the residents are...trustworthy. Tubbo is okay. Signing- uh, signing out. This is Ranboo. If I didn't already say that."

Ranboo winces at the awkwardness of his report, but doesn't have time to rerecord it, so he just sends it in before going boneless in his seat.

Oh man, the Dean already hates him for some reason, the least he can do is actually send in his reports on time. Ranboo is shaken from his moping by whispering coming from... somewhere. Ranboo covers his ears. He doesn't want to hear it. He doesn't want any of this. He wants to go home.

He puts his pillow over his head and blocks out the noises that have been following him since he's arrived.

Chapter End Notes

so a bit of an announcemnet, two of em actually. One, I've moved all human error stuff to a different tumblr so as not to swamp my art blog.

[here it is](#) please direct all future asks here :D

also, another important announcement, I'm going on break! probably for the rest of the month. Im going to be on vacation and then with friends, and even beyond that, i really do need to take a break. I've been keeping a consistent upload schedule for three months, I've earned it.

see yall in august, im skipping town!

Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

the plot begins

ALSO im back a week early! i was meant to do something this week but it got moved to august! i get restless. anyway check the authors notes at the bottom for a BIG ANNOUNCEMENT!! (I'm not going on break again)

warnings for this chapter:

- panic attacks

- terror

- generally its just emotionally destructive for our protag

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

With his report finished, Ranboo settles in. The curfew Phil had set means that he won't be leaving his room until morning.

Nights in the Sleepy Boi's Inc are long, mainly because Ranboo lies awake most of the time, sure that if he falls asleep, he'll wake to a murderer standing over him.

Slowly, the night passes, though the morning leaves Ranboo just as exhausted as he had been when he laid down. Still, he can't sit in bed and mope all day, so he gets up out of his bed with a groan and a stretch. He shakes out his tail to stop the tuft of fur on the end from being squished to one side, and once he's satisfied with the puffiness of it, he heads down the hall and to the dining room, where he can already smell breakfast cooking.

It's a pleasant surprise to find that Ranboo isn't as nervous as he was yesterday. He slows down as he approaches the kitchen, trying to figure out why he's not dreading being around Wilbur as much.

His hand brushes the leather-bound tome strapped to his waist, and he makes a short, happy trilling sound as he remembers what had occurred yesterday. He flips it open and reads

through it, pleased at the reminders.

He straps the book back on his hip and continues on his way to the kitchen, hands already itching to write things down. The idea of lying down to sleep and actually *knowing* what had happened the day before is a foreign one, but certainly not unwelcome.

Breakfast is surprisingly nice, Wilbur isn't nearly as cold as he had been since Ranboo arrived, and Phil is just as friendly as he's been the entire time, but there is a sort of genuine warmth in his eyes that Ranboo hadn't seen before.

Tubbo still darts out of the room minutes into breakfast, and Technoblade is dead silent pretty much the entire time, but hey. It's still progress.

Ranboo follows Phil into the kitchen to help with dishes once breakfast is over and everyone splits off from the group to do their various tasks around the ship but is driven out of the room by a withering glare from Phil. Apparently, the captain doesn't want a repeat of yesterday, so Ranboo settles for clearing the table instead, the compulsive need for being useful thrumming under his skin.

Once breakfast is over and the kitchen is clean, Phil walks off to the front of the ship to navigate them through the endless void of space. Ranboo stands in the kitchen, scribbling down everything he's done today before he forgets it. He's detailing a story Phil had been telling him when he hears what sounds like swearing in Nethertounge, and he's immediately intrigued. It must be Technoblade, being the only Netherborn on the entire ship, and it doesn't seem like there's much that could shake him.

So Ranboo returns his book to his hip and sets off to follow the noises.

They aren't particularly hard to track, Ranboo's hearing is pretty good, and Techno is making no attempt to be quiet. The enderian draws closer to the source of the noise, which appears to be a training deck if the map folded in between the pages of his journal is to be trusted. He hears the telltale '*shing*' of a sword as he walks closer, and despite his usual skittishness, Ranboo is curious. He's never seen a piglin fight before, and he's curious. Everyone knows of piglin's bloodright of violence, though perhaps that's a little unfair. Either way, Techno has a propensity for fighting, and Ranboo wants to see.

He knocks before he enters, as instructed, but no one says a word, so Ranboo assumes Techno didn't hear him. He hesitates before opening the door, but if Techno gets mad at him Ranboo could always use the defense that he wasn't told *not* to.

Oh, who is he kidding, if Techno so much as looks at him funny he'll be cowering where he stands. Ranboo opens the door and straightens up slightly at what he sees.

Techno fights like a dancer, which is surprising considering his stature, his sword cutting through enemies only visible to him, his breathing deep and even despite his constant movement.

Ranboo watches, unnoticed in the shadow of the hallway, for several minutes, enraptured by Techno's training.

All good things must come to an end, however, especially for Ranboo, because he overbalances when he leans forward to get a better look and tumbles into the room with a yelp. Techno's gaze snaps to him, and then there is a sword pointed at his face.

Ranboo goes very still. He did *not* expect this level of anger.

Then, Techno's vision focuses, and he huffs, returning his sword to the sheath on his hip.

"What are you doing in here?" Techno asks gruffly. Ranboo looks at the ground, ears twitching guiltily.

"I just... I wanted to see you fight?" Ranboo says, shame welling up in him, though he doesn't quite know why. Techno rolls his eyes.

"This isn't fighting." He says. "No enemies here, except the training dummies." The piglin gestures vaguely to the decimated dummies scattered in pieces across the gym. Ranboo swallows, throat suddenly dry.

"Well..." Ranboo begins, tearing his eyes off of a dummy that had been completely beheaded. "If this is just training, it would be amazing to see you actually fight. You could probably take on a human-"

Techno whips around, hand back on the hilt of his sword, fire in his gaze. He takes a step towards Ranboo.

"Who said anything about humans?" He asks darkly, hand tightening on the sword on his hip. Ranboo stares, mouth open as he tries to figure out how to smooth over whatever mistake he's made.

"Nobody? It was just the scariest thing I could think of? I- I didn't mean-"

Techno cuts him off with a huff, letting go of his sword. Ranboo relaxes slightly. At least he won't be skewered for crossing a line he hadn't even been aware of. Techno turns, walking to a wall of swords and hanging it up with the others.

"There are no humans this deep in space," Techno says firmly, adjusting his sword. There are gems embedded in it, they catch the light in a beautiful way.

"I know," Ranboo says quietly. Techno fixes him with another glare.

"Don't bring it up again," He hisses as he shoulders past him and into the hall. Ranboo waits until he's walked far enough away that Ranboo won't run into him again, and turns to follow, to go back to his room and forget about that entire interaction. He definitely won't be putting *that* in his memory book.

As he turns to leave, his eyes catch on a small reddish-brown stain on the floor, halfway underneath a bench. It looks like it had been scrubbed many times, but never came out.

It's blood, Ranboo can smell that.

No one on this ship has blood that color.

Ranboo tries not to look at it as he leaves.

Ranboo ponders his situation as he walks back to his room, keeping his head low. The last thing he wants is to have any more uncomfortable interactions.

The picture being painted is pretty clear, so he starts to write as he walks, trying to get all his thoughts in order.

'Tommy is a crewmate who died, probably recently.' He writes, handwriting a bit shaky with the bouncing of his gait. *'Tubbo was close, Phil and Wilbur too. Techno hasn't brought it up. Techno hates? Is scared of? humans.'*

With all the facts laid out, it's not hard to make an inference. Tommy was a crewmate who was killed, and judging by the way Techno reacted, probably by a human. Techno is the sole security officer, it would be no surprise if he's still feeling guilt about the death of a crewmate. It would explain the piglin's aversion to even *bringing up* humans.

Ranboo pushes open the door to his room, nose still buried in his book, and flops down on his bed, placing the book on his chest and sighing deeply.

He frowns. His legs are hanging over the end of the bed. Ranboo sits bolt upright. Shoot. This isn't his room. He looks around frantically, hoping against hope that it's not Techno's.

He pales when he realizes where he is. Oh no. This is much worse. He's in Tommy's room, if he's caught in here, so soon after offending Techno then he'll surely be kicked off the ship. Ranboo gets to his feet, hands going to the blanket to make sure he hadn't messed anything up too badly. Maybe he can just leave and no one will ever know he's been here.

He looks up, making sure he hadn't somehow managed to break something in the few seconds he'd been here, and he makes eye contact with someone.

Ranboo goes still. He... doesn't know this person. Their eyes aren't like any of the others', the closest one would be Techno, but the color's all wrong. Then Ranboo processes the rest of their face, and his heart drops.

Oh.

Oh no.

"You aren't supposed to be in here," The human says in common, sounding uncomfortable. Ranboo chokes out a breath and stumbles backward, falling to the floor, too shocked to even be confused about the fact that the human apparently speaks common. The human steps out from behind the bed, and it would be almost funny how much Ranboo is cowering from them with how much bigger the enderian is than the human, but there is absolutely nothing funny about this. Humans have done *insane* destruction everywhere they go. Ranboo has no doubt this one, even though Ranboo can tell they're not full-grown, could kill him without breaking a sweat.

"If you have a heart attack and die Phil is gonna be so mad at me," The human mutters, more to themselves than anything else, but Ranboo doesn't even register the words. It finally fully hits him that there is a *human* in the room with him. On a ship. In space. Where the only exit is the airlock.

Ranboo screams, a loud warbling shriek that has the human covering their ears and reeling backward. Ranboo is relieved for a moment that at least *one* of his defense mechanisms works against a human, but that doesn't last, because the human lunges forward and smacks a hand over his mouth.

Ranboo goes silent, trembling slightly. He could bite the human's hand off, his teeth are certainly sharp enough to do so, but humans can live *and* fight with missing limbs, and the last thing Ranboo wants to do is actually make them *angry*. The human rolls their eyes, and Ranboo has a slightly hysterical moment where he almost laughs, remembering Wilbur doing the same thing.

"Great," The human drawls, sounding tired. "Now you cant leave."

Ranboo starts screaming again in earnest, though it's muffled by the human's hand. The human swears in whatever mothertounge they use, grumbling irritably in their throat.

"Not like *that* ," They hiss, not removing their hand from Ranboo's mouth even as he shrieks at the top of his lungs. *Where* is the crew? Surely they've heard him crying out. "I'm not going to kill you, stop screaming, you're givin' me a fuckin' headache."

Ranboo stops screaming. The human's shoulders slump in what must be... relief? He'll have to tell the ICA that gesture when he gets back. Well, *if* he gets back, which is looking increasingly unlikely as the minutes tick on.

Ranboo draws all his magic up into one spot just behind his breastplate, and teleports into the hallway with a familiar 'vwoop'. The human shouts in surprise, but Ranboo is already bolting to the main body of the ship, silently thanking End that his niche is speed.

"Help!" Ranboo shrieks, louder than he's been in years. He's gotten so used to taking up as little space as possible for so long, his throat strains with the effort of shouting. "Phil! Techno! *Anybody* !"

The human is right behind him, Ranboo doesn't even know how that happened.

" *Please!* " Ranboo cries out, the desperation in his voice surprising even him.

He rounds a corner, and there they are. Ranboo sobs with relief, darting towards the crew gathered in the main body of the ship, they all look to him with shock. There's no way the human can take all five of them, they're not even full-grown. Ranboo knows he's being a little optimistic right now, but he *really* wants to get out of this alive, okay?

Techno steps forward, and Ranboo has never been more glad to see him, even with the awkwardness from earlier. He's the security, he'll protect Ranboo!

The piglin wraps his hands around Ranboo's thin wrists, pinning them together before kicking Ranboo's legs out from under him and holding him to the floor.

"Wh- what are you doing?" Ranboo says, too confused to be embarrassed about the childish fear that is creeping its way into his voice.

Phil sighs, sounding disappointed. Ranboo lets out a dry sob, hoping Techno can't feel how much he's trembling.

"I'm sorry Ranboo," Phil says quietly, kneeling down and putting a hand on Ranboo's head. "We're not going to hurt you."

Ranboo has never been more confused in his life. The human is standing *right* there, why are they all acting like *he's* the threat.

"You were supposed to stay hidden," Phil says to the human, getting back up to his feet. Ranboo twitches, looking up at Phil in confusion. Why would he be trying to hide something so dangerous? Doesn't he want to *protect* his crew?

The human scoffs, crossing their arms in what Ranboo thinks is defensiveness.

"He went into *my* room," They say. Techno shoots Ranboo an annoyed look.

"I thought we told you to knock before you go into rooms." The piglin grumbles, adjusting his grip on Ranboo's wrists. The enderian gapes at Techno, trying to get a handle on what's happening.

" *That* is what you're worried about right now?" Ranboo sputters, struggling under Techno's grip. Tubbo kneels in front of where Ranboo is pinned, looking sympathetic.

"Sorry Ranboo, you weren't supposed to find out." He says with a sigh. Ranboo bites back a warble, sure that he'll be killed. If the SBI is housing a human there's no way he's going to be allowed to give his reports. "Tommy was supposed to avoid you until you left. And please stop struggling, you're going to hurt yourself."

Ranboo does stop, but only out of confusion.

"Tommy?" He asks, eyes darting to each crew member. "I thought-"

"You made some assumptions that weren't entirely true," Phil explains, voice even in a way that would be soothing if Ranboo didn't know he would probably be giving the order for Techno to snap his neck in the next few minutes. "Tommy lives on the ship, he has for about three months now."

All the strangeness of the ship lines up suddenly, and it all clicks in Ranboo's head.

"Oh." He says weakly. He's trembling a bit, but he doesn't feel too ashamed about it. He *really* doesn't want to die, but it seems like there aren't a lot of ways to get out of this. Tubbo seems to notice his terror, wincing a bit.

"Ranboo, Tommy's not gonna hurt you." He promises. The human- *Tommy* , scoffs a bit, arms still crossed.

"Maybe," He says under his breath, caught by Ranboo's sharp hearing. Ranboo lets out a terrified chirping sound and Tubbo whacks Tommy on the back of the head.

Ranboo freezes, going dead silent, waiting for the human to snap and tear out Tubbo's throat for the blatant show of disrespect. Ranboo wants to shut his eyes, not wanting to see someone who had been relatively nice to him be killed, but he can't.

Tommy... doesn't do anything in retaliation. He only shoots a glare at Tubbo that has Ranboo's stomach drop, rubbing the back of his head where the apisaid had hit it. If Ranboo didn't know better, he'd say the human was *pouting* .

Wilbur, who had left a few minutes ago, returns to the main body, holding up a length of rope triumphantly.

"Found it!" He cheers, and Ranboo begins struggling in earnest again, making Techno tighten his grip to an almost painful degree.

"No!" Ranboo wails, breath coming in quick pants. "Please *don't!*"

Phil puts a hand on his head, and the softness of the gesture makes Ranboo want to scream.

"Sorry mate," Phil says. He sounds like he means it, but Ranboo is *still* being held down. He must be crying, because his face burns even as Phil wipes the tears away with his sleeve before they can do any real damage.

"Can you...knock him out or something?" The human asks, sounding uncomfortable as Ranboo sobs on the floor. Techno scoffs.

"He's not like you, if I tried to knock him out I'd just kill him."

The security guard's words don't dull Ranboo's panic, in fact, they increase his sobbing and struggling quite a bit. Phil curses, shooting Techno a glare that Ranboo can barely see through his tears.

The muttered stream of begging that has been spilling from Ranboo's mouth suddenly rises into screaming sobs when he feels Wilbur tying his ankles, stopping him from being able to run. It's *far* too soon for him to teleport again. Wilbur checks the bindings, making sure they're tight enough to hold him, but not enough to cut off circulation. He moves to his wrists, binding them as well.

"Please, please, End- don't do this please, *please* !" Ranboo sobs, nearly choking on his words. He hates being held down more than anything, he hates this, he hates this, he hates this.

The crew members are discussing something above him, like he's not even there. Techno is no longer holding him down, which soothes his panic a bit, though he's still bound and on the floor, so he's still weeping quietly.

He's starting to drift from his body, sobs quieting as his mind tries to escape from the situation. He catches the words 'magic dampening' and 'burns' before he's fully gone, and then he goes still, barely aware of what's happening around him. He sees the concerned faces of the crew, and then his vision fogs over.

Chapter End Notes

thanks for reading! as always leaving a comment is the best way to get more writing faster!

also, big announcement! i have officially opened a discord server for human error! join us! become legion!

[CLICK HERE TO JOIN](#)

you can also get bonus content (including ranboo's backstory) on my tumblr! located [HERE](#)

Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

warnings
-disassociation
-brief vomit ment
-starvation ment

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Ranboo must have blacked out, or his brain checked out of the situation so completely that he lost time, because when his vision returns, and with it his mind, he's in a cell.

Ranboo takes in a shaky breath, hands coming up to rub at his face, though he snatches them back with a pained hiss when his fingers brush the new burns that trace down his cheeks. He lifts his head warily, hoping none of the crew, or worse- the *human* , are in the room with him.

There's no one. He's alone. The room is... strangely messy for a cell. There are blankets and pillows piled around the room, still indented like someone had been laying on top of them, and a small stack of puzzles and games in the corner. Ranboo sits up. He had been placed on a cot, though not one suited to his height this time.

His claws trace through a thin layer of dust. Actually... *everything* in this cell seems to be coated in a thin layer of dust, as though no one had entered it in quite a while.

Ranboo hopes they do come back, at least to give him food. He doesn't want to waste away in a cell, even if the people on the other side of the door are much more frightening than starvation.

Ranboo sits for a few minutes, processing what had happened and trying to keep his breathing deep and even.

He had barely managed to stop his breath from trembling when the door opens and someone steps in. Ranboo's gaze snaps to them, and he pushes himself into a corner, dead silent and shaking.

It's Tubbo, looking surprised to see Ranboo awake. He's holding a tray of food, and everything in Ranboo sings in relief at the knowledge that he won't be left to starve.

"Oh." Tubbo says, setting the food down on a small table. "I didn't expect you to be... you were just kinda staring at the wall whenever we came to check on you."

Ranboo doesn't say anything, making Tubbo's antennae flick back guiltily.

"Ranboo I'm sorry," Tubbo sighs. "Tommy is family, alright? You might not understand that but... he deserves to have somewhere safe to go. You- you do too, okay? We're going to figure this out. You're not staying in here forever."

Ranboo nods, but he doesn't believe a word out of the apisaids' mouth. If Tommy really is family then there's no way they're going to sacrifice the human's safety for his. Ranboo is... a stranger. He's been here for what? Two days? The timeline's a little fuzzy honestly, but it wasn't very long. Not long enough to mean anything to the crew.

Tubbo leaves, fixing him with another uncomfortable look.

"Try to eat something, okay?" He says with a deep frown. Ranboo nods again, but makes no move to get to his food. The door shuts, leaving him alone again.

Ranboo... doesn't know what to do.

Everything went so bad so fast. This was supposed to be a regular cargo ship, not one harboring one of the most dangerous creatures in the galaxy. Which they have supposedly *accepted into their ranks*. He felt *good* this morning! He should have known his good luck wouldn't last. What was he going to tell the ICA-

The ICA.

That's *it!* That might be his one chance at getting rescued. Ranboo is sure he can come up with some way of subtly hinting at the fact that he's been kidnapped by a crazed band of space pirates! He gets to his feet, trying not to think about how wobbly he feels in his nervousness, and ambles towards the door, needing to duck his head a bit thanks to the low ceilings.

"Tubbo?" He calls out the door, voice thin with anxiety.

"Uh... Tubbo's not here." Ranboo shrinks back at the voice. It's the human, speaking Common in their strange accent. "I can go get him if you want?"

"I just- if I don't give my report-"

"Oh fuck I forgot about that," Tommy says- and *End* , is it strange to be referring to a human by name. "I'll just- I'll go get him."

Ranboo waits until the human's strange footfalls are too distant for even him to hear, and begins his master plan. He doesn't exactly know what he's going to do once he's out of the cell, but anything is better than being crammed in a dark cell with a *human* guarding the door.

Ranboo closes his eyes and takes a deep breath. It's always harder drawing up his magic when he's stressed, not to mention the fact that his magic always seems to be on the fritz thanks to the fact that he's half-marked. With enough patience, the cool feeling of his magic builds in his chest. He releases it with another breath, but chokes when it sputters out.

He's... still in the cell. Ranboo gapes at his surroundings. Sure, his magic has a tendency to go haywire, but it's never just *not worked* before! Before Ranboo can have any more time to panic over this new development, the door turns transparent again, and on the other side is Tommy, Tubbo, and Phil. Ranboo's stomach immediately drops at the sight of not only the human, but also the captain of the entire vessel.

Phil doesn't do anything, only gives Ranboo a tense smile before stepping back and letting Tommy and Tubbo step forward. They don't make a move to open the door, but Ranboo presses himself into the corner anyway. The human's face twitches in what Ranboo vaguely recognizes as displeasure, and renewed dread fills Ranboo. He does *not* want to make a habit of pissing off the human.

"So, what do you do for fun?" Tubbo asks casually, making Ranboo pause.

"What?" The enderian rasps.

"What was your favorite subject at the ICA?" Tubbo says in lieu of a response.

"I don't-"

"I'm just trying to make conversation, Boo. Get to know you better." Tubbo says easily. Tommy stands slightly behind him, arms crossed. He looks uncomfortable. Ranboo feels like there is something... *off* about this conversation, but it's not like he's able to refuse.

"I- I like writing classes." Ranboo says quietly, looking at the floor. "I like- I like to write."

"What's your favorite thing to write about?" Tubbo asks, leaning against the door.

"I don't know, uh- short stories, I guess? I can never remember how it's supposed to go with the longer ones."

They talk for several minutes like that, Tubbo asking strange, innocent questions and Ranboo answering. After a while, the enderian almost forgets where he is, why he's talking to Tubbo from the other side of an impassable door.

Ranboo takes a breath, and Tubbo turns to Tommy, who had been muttering under his breath throughout the conversation, though never weighing in loudly enough to be heard.

"You got it?" Tubbo asks. The human nods, pulling out Ranboo's communication device. The enderian twitches forward, forming half-baked plans to grab it from the human and teleport out, to a closet where he can send a distress signal to the ICA, so he can go home.

Well, not *home*. He doesn't think he can ever go back there, or at least not be welcomed. He'd go back to the ICA, even if he'd miss the bed the Sleepy Bois had given him.

He shakes his head clear of distractions, returning his attention to the trio standing outside of his door. Tommy presses the recording button with his thumb and clears his throat.

"Hey, this is Ranboo." He says in a near perfect imitation of Ranboo's voice. Ranboo wants to kick himself. How could he have forgotten that humans are mimics? He was supposed to be a student at the *ICA*! How could he forget one of their main hunting tactics. "I'm calling in to let you know that everything's fine on my end. The signal's not great here, so if I sound a little funny, you know why. Ranboo of the ICA, signing out."

Tommy presses the red button to end the recording and listens to it back, making a face.

"That was terrible, they'll never buy that." Tommy says moving to delete the file. Tubbo grabs his arm.

"What are you talking about? That sounded just like him!" Tubbo argues.

The two bicker for a while, overseen by a fondly exasperated Phil. Ranboo watches the captain, and the captain watches him.

His terror has risen to its peak and crashed back down, leaving him numb. Until it rises again and threatens to drown him, he will be still. The captain stares at him, though he looks at a spot past Ranboo's shoulder, avoiding eye contact. Ranboo appreciates the kindness, even in moments as... *unfortunate* as these.

Ranboo's attention is ripped away from the silent elytrian when Tubbo wins the brief scuffle. How Tubbo won a wrestling match with a *human* Ranboo doesn't want to know. Perhaps he was right to be intimidated by the apisaidd. Tubbo holds up the comm victoriously, pressing send.

"Stop being all paranoid," He drawls to Tommy. "Humans have better voice recognition than most other species, they're not gonna be able to tell the difference."

"You don't know that." Tommy says, crossing his arms again. Ranboo's dread crashes over him once again when he realizes that he really has no way out of this. No way to contact the school, no way to get out of the cell what with the magic dampening sigils carved into the walls. How any of them even *knew* how to do that he has no idea.

"You're not going to get away with this," Ranboo says lowly, voice shaking. All three of them stop to look at him. Ranboo wilts under the attention, but doesn't back down.

"You," Tommy says, and Ranboo twitches nervously at being directly addressed by a human. "Are a dramatic bitch."

Tubbo kicks him in the back of the knee, making the human stumble before whipping around to glare at the apisaïd.

"Stop being a dick!" Tubbo scolds, and the two of them are back to wrestling. Ranboo sways in place anxiously. He doesn't know if Tommy is going to seriously hurt Tubbo. Even on accident, how could Tommy avoid it? Phil doesn't seem too concerned about it though, so Ranboo tries not to let it worry him too much.

Eventually, Tubbo manages to jab Tommy in *some* weak spot, knocking the wind out of him and leaving the human on the floor gasping for breath. With Tommy indisposed, Tubbo turns his attention back to Ranboo, still standing awkwardly on the other side of the door. He says nothing, apparently waiting for Ranboo to speak. Well, if Ranboo is allowed to speak his mind, then he's going to. It's not like he has much to lose at this point.

"Why are you *doing* this," Ranboo croaks. Tubbo's cheerful demeanor vanishes like dew in the sun. "Don't you know how *dangerous* humans are? You're putting the entire galaxy in danger. If- if someone comes looking for him, they'll kill all of-

"No one's coming." Tommy says, making Ranboo jump. He hadn't realized he'd recovered from Tubbo's lighthearted attack so quickly. "I- yeah. No one's coming up here for me, Ranboo."

Ranboo turns his gaze to Tubbo, who looks at the floor, avoiding the enderian's gaze, likely not for cultural reasons this time.

"Ranboo, humans aren't like that." Tubbo says, sounding a bit bitter. "They taught bullshit at the ICA. Humans aren't... they aren't wild, and they aren't bloodthirsty either."

"They've killed-

"Every time they've killed it was in self-defense!" Tubbo shouts, making Ranboo flinch back. "Stop acting like-

Tubbo goes quiet when Tommy puts a hand on his shoulder. The human shakes his head and Tubbo grumbles in anger before storming off down the hall. Phil gives Ranboo a desperate sort of look before trailing after the apisaïd, likely trying to stop him from blowing a hole in the side of the ship in his attempt to blow off steam.

Tommy stays, standing on the other side of the door.

Ranboo has slid down to sit against the wall at some point, leaving him looking up at the human. Tommy sits down too, they end up on the same level.

"I, uh- they locked me up when I got here too." Tommy says. Ranboo says nothing, putting his head in his knees. "Look, I'm sorry, and I don't say that a lot, but I know how much this sucks. If it makes you feel any better, at least you actually speak the same language as the crew. I thought they were gonna eat me for real."

Ranboo smiles, encouraging Tommy to continue.

"We really aren't going to keep you in there for very long," The human promises. "I know... I know this is- well, it's fucking terrible. Nothing bad is going to happen to you, okay? While you're here, you're under our protection." Tommy pauses, looking a bit pained. "You're under- well, you're under mine too. Not a lot of people can say that."

There is a long pause. They are both silent save for Ranboo's ragged breathing.

"How can I believe you?" Ranboo chokes out. Tommy is quiet, thinking.

"You have my word," Tommy says, ducking his head. Ranboo doesn't quite know what it means, but he knows an oath when he sees one.

Tommy gets up and leaves, following the apisaid and his captain. Ranboo stays sitting on the floor of the cell he will be staying in for the foreseeable future. He puts his head in his knees.

Ranboo picks at his food over the course of the next hour or two, not eating more than a few bites, sure that it would come right back up if he tried. He spends his time staving off further disassociation by picking at his skin and staring at the wall. There isn't a clock in the room, but the lights go out without warning, which must mean it's night.

Ranboo lets out a desperate warble at the sudden darkness, pressing his hands over his eyes. He *hates* being in the dark. There was at least the light of passing stars in the guest room, but

there is nothing here, and the door is shut.

Ranboo rubs at the rope burns on his arms. He must have struggled while he was spaced out. He... this entire situation is all too familiar. Ranboo hates it. He hates it, he hates it, he wants to leave he doesn't want to be here he wants to go *home* he wants the lights to come back on-

And they do.

Ranboo lets out a thin shriek when his cell is flooded with light again, scrambling back into a corner. Phil stands on the other side of the door, looking at him in shock.

"I brought you water," He says, quiet and even. The door opens just long enough for Phil to set the jug of water inside, and then it closes again, though it stays transparent. Ranboo says nothing. He will drink it when Phil leaves, though he'd have to be especially careful not to burn his face since he doesn't have a straw.

"Do you... not like the dark?" Phil asks. Ranboo's gaze snaps to the captain, surprised at being addressed again.

"No," Ranboo croaks. Phil's tail feathers rattle concernedly.

"I thought Enderia was mostly in the dark."

Ranboo looks down. Phil seems to understand his mistake, wincing.

"Oh, sorry mate." He says, ducking his head. Ranboo shrugs, waiting for Phil to leave him alone again. The elytrian continues speaking, however, to Ranboo's surprise. He wouldn't think the crew would spare much energy talking to a prisoner.

"Ranboo, I'm sorry that this happened," Phil says lowly. Ranboo is silent. "I- you weren't meant to ever find out. We wanted- I was going to try to make things better for you, at the school. I still will, once we send you back." Ranboo's heart soars at the phrasing. *Once* we send you back, not if. He nearly sobs in relief, but manages to silence himself. "If- if there was any other way, I wouldn't be doing this. Ranboo, Tommy is family, and if you reported him he would be killed. Or worse."

"I understand." Ranboo whispers. He doesn't.

"We aren't going to... *do* anything." Phil insists. "Try to get some sleep."

The door closes, and Ranboo shudders at the darkness, the dry whispers of the Void reaching him even here. The lights flicker and return, lower than they had been before, dim enough to sleep in but not enough to make the ever encroaching terror increase in Ranboo's heart.

Phil says nothing, and Ranboo makes no move to thank him, considering the fact that he's technically being kidnapped by him, but he hears retreating footsteps, and knows he's alone again. Well, at least the lights are out this time.

Ranboo creeps towards the jug of water sitting in front of the door, strangely nervous, as though the jug would explode suddenly. If Tubbo had any influence then it wasn't far out of the realm of possibility. There is a small package lying next to the jug, wrapped in paper. Ranboo reaches for that first, hands trembling.

He tears the paper away and cracks a small smile at what he sees.

It's the journal Wilbur had given him, still filled with his scratchy writing. There is a note sitting on top.

'you left this in the living room'

Ranboo sighs, setting the book to the side to look at the other contents of the package. There is a new pen, which at least solves how he's actually going to write in his returned journal, and a straw.

Ranboo makes a short, happy trill and dives for the water, thrilled to be able to drink without burning the corners of his mouth.

He drinks all of it in record time, having not had any water yet. Once he's drank enough that his throat no longer feels like sandpaper, he picks up his journal and the pen and sits on his too-small cot.

'Day 3 aboard the SBI.' He writes. 'Met Tommy. He's a human. Crew found out I knew and locked me in a cell. They aren't going to kill me (lying?). Tommy is uncomfortable around me, says he knows what I'm going through and not to be afraid.'

Ranboo lays down and sets the book on his chest, wrapping his arms around himself.

He wants to go home.

Chapter End Notes

Howdy again! Apparently the discord link didn't work last time so I'm trying again!

If you liked this chapter, leave a comment! It's the best way to get more writing faster!

[join the human error discord server](#)

Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

did you know you get more honest the more tired you are?

content warnings

-human trafficking ment

-cult ment

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Ranboo does not sleep easy, spending a majority of the night tossing and turning, waiting for the door to open, for someone to come in and kill him.

He has nightmares, quick and terrifying. Some are of the human, eyes bright and furious, some are of older horrors. Ranboo being held down, shoved into the Well. The memories shift and blend until it isn't his Elders pushing him into the endless Void, it's Technoblade. Ranboo calls on his magic to get him out before he is completely lost, but it fizzles out before it can build enough to teleport out of the hands that press him down. Ranboo chokes out a dry sob, curling into himself, and then he isn't in the Well, or on the floor, or trapped.

He's just lying there, looking at the ceiling.

Ranboo rolls onto his side, gasping for breath. He clenches his teeth, trying not to cry too loudly and risk drawing in the crew. A whimper sounds from him, no matter how hard he tries to stifle it, and something moves outside of the door.

Ranboo freezes immediately, eyes going wide, residual terror from his nightmares flooding back. Neither Ranboo nor the person moves for a few long seconds, and then his guard (for what else could they be, but a guard to a prisoner) speaks.

"Uh- are you okay?" Tommy asks, voice hushed in the relative darkness. The overhead lights are still on, dimmed, and for that Ranboo is endlessly grateful.

"Yeah," Ranboo croaks out. He almost laughs at the fact that he's actually *relieved* that Tommy is the one at his door over any of the other crewmembers. He never thought he'd see the day when he'd actually be *glad* to have a human watching over him.

"Liar. Can I open the door?" Tommy asks. Ranboo flinches at being caught in his lie so easily.

"Sure," Ranboo says lowly. He won't try to escape, not with Tommy at the door. Ranboo thinks they both know that.

The door slides open, and the human steps inside. Ranboo suppresses the instinctive shudder that crawls up his spine at the fact that a human is in the room with him.

Tommy sits on the opposite side of the room as Ranboo, sliding against the wall until he is sitting on the floor. Ranboo sits on his cot. It feels strange to be looking down at something he had been trained to fear his entire life, but it would be worse to look up at him, so Ranboo stays where he is.

They are quiet for a while, the only sounds in the room being their breathing, just barely out of sync.

"You scared?" Tommy asks eventually.

"Yeah," Ranboo admits. Tommy hums and dips his head.

"Yeah, that makes sense." He says with a sigh, sliding down further against the wall. "I'm not gonna hurt you, but I can leave if you want me to."

"No," Ranboo says quietly, shocked at the words even as they come out of his mouth. "Stay."

Tommy is just as surprised as Ranboo, sitting back down from where he had begun to stand.

"Okay." He agrees, closing his eyes. Ranboo appreciates it. Eyes are one of human's scariest features. "Did you have a nightmare?"

"Yeah," Ranboo says, tucking his head into his knees. He doesn't know why he's spilling everything to a human when trained interrogators hadn't been able to get him to crack. Maybe because he actually seems to care, that he's not just trying to get information. Maybe Ranboo is just tired.

"What were you dreaming about?"

"I- do you know what I am?" Ranboo asks. Tommy opens one eye to look him over and then closes it again.

"Tubbo told me you're an enderian, but that means fuck-all to me," Tommy admits. Ranboo hums, feeling a bit soothed that Tommy doesn't know of his species'... *history* .

"Well, we- we have magic, for lack of a better word," Ranboo explains. Tommy's mouth curls up in a small amused smile.

"Yeah? Like Harry Potter and shit?"

"I don't- I don't know what that means."

"Yeah, you weren't supposed to. I saw you teleport Ranboo, I know you've got magic."

"Oh- uh, okay. Well, uh- when enderians turn twelve we- the magic gets... unleashed." Ranboo pauses, words freezing in his throat. He swallows, heart rate increasing, rushing blood to his ears.

"Is it... painful?" Tommy asks. His expression tells Ranboo that the human already knows the answer. Ranboo swallows again, a hand coming up to brush the black side of his face.

"It's not supposed to be," Ranboo rasps. Tommy clenches his jaw.

"What happened?" He asks before his eyes widen slightly. "I mean you don't have to tell me, but you should tell *someone* , because- I don't know. That's just what you're supposed to do."

Ranboo laughs quietly, and Tommy ducks his head to hide a smile.

"Um, so-" Ranboo laughs again, a bit hysterically. "When an enderian turns twelve- well okay. So a long time ago we figured out that when you dug down in a certain spot there was this big black hole that went on forever, and the people who dug it kind of like- fell in, and when they got pulled out they started trying to get everyone to go in too." Ranboo explains. Tommy screws up his face.

"That is some cult shit, Ranboob." The human says disdainfully.

"It's Ran *boo*," Ranboo corrects quietly.

"That's what I said."

"...Right, so anyway, eventually enough people were dragged into the Well that they started forming whole religions around it, and it was like all anyone cared about anymore. Because it-"

Ranboo snaps his mouth shut. He *can't* tell Tommy about how the magic is unlocked. That's what enderians get taken for, he can't just spill his planet's biggest secret to a human because he was nice to him after a nightmare. Who *knows* what kind of damage humans could do if they had magic.

"Well, because it enlightens you. I guess." Ranboo finishes lamely. "So when you're twelve, you get taken to the Well. That's what we call the hole that got dug. It's the Well Of the Void. The Elders kind of-" Ranboo's voice catches, his breathing picks up. "They- they hold you in it."

Tommy shrinks back, guilt painting the lines of his face.

"Oh fuck, it probably wasn't great for you to get tied up, then?"

"No," Ranboo says with a wet laugh. "It kind of sucked really bad."

The enderian clears his throat, eager to finish the story before the memory consumes him.

"So they push you into the Well, and you- it breaks your mind," Ranboo admits, lowering his voice to a whisper even though there is no other enderian for lightyears around. "They say it enlightens you, but whenever people come out of it they act completely different, they can't think the way they used to. They turn... cruel."

"Did you... did that happen to you?" Tommy asks, looking wary. Ranboo smiles, a bit bitterly.

"Not all the way," Ranboo admits, gesturing to the white half of his body. "Enderians start out pure white, but we turn black when we go to the Void. It's called being Marked, but- but I didn't want-" Ranboo takes a breath, trying to calm himself enough to get the words out. "I didn't want it. I saw what it did to other people. What it could do to me. I couldn't escape from the Elders, but once I was halfway in the Well, my magic was unlocked and I teleported out."

"So that's how you get your magic?" Tommy asks, leaning forward. "The Well?"

Ranboo's heart freezes. He... hadn't meant to say that.

"You can't tell anyone," Ranboo rushes out, not even caring to mask the desperation in his voice. Tommy blinks, looking a bit taken aback by Ranboo's intensity. "Not even the crew. I didn't mean to say that, *please* ." Tommy shakes away his shock and nods his head.

"I won't tell a soul, Ranboob," Tommy promises, then does a strange motion, pinching his fingers in front of his mouth and pulling, then flicking his fingers away from his face.

"What was that?"

"It- zipping your lips and throwing away the key."

"What?"

"It was a promise not to tell, don't worry about it. Finish your story."

"Right, well," Ranboo clears his throat, trying to remember where he left off. "What was I..."

"You teleported out of the Well," Tommy reminds him. Ranboo perks up.

"Oh yeah! So I teleported out, but no one else had ever had a power like that, so I was the first person half-marked. It- well, it almost killed me." Ranboo's voice turns a little quieter.

"I- the Void- I *saw* it, Tommy. I saw... *endlessness* . It was terrifying and... well, it was a lot of things. Everything really. But it didn't... *consume* me the way it did everyone else. It usually will get in people's brains... control them, in a way."

Ranboo swallows, taking a breath.

"I- what I saw was... indescribable. It broke me, in a way. It's not something any living thing should be able to see, and... it messed me up." Ranboo looks to the ceiling, where the overhead lights still buzz softly. "Probably forever." He admits in a whisper. Tommy is silent, so Ranboo continues.

"That's why my memory is so messed up, which made me even more of a freak to my community." Ranboo puts his chin in his hand, signing deeply. "I couldn't hunt, I couldn't remember *anything* , and I was only half-marked. To my family, my friends, my neighbors- to *everyone*, I was... nothing."

"And that's why you were at the ICA?" Tommy asks. Ranboo hums an affirmative. "Tubbo *said* it was weird that an enderian would be so far off-planet."

"He's right," Ranboo sighs. "We almost never leave, especially not after the Seeing, that's what we call going into the Well." Ranboo clarifies after seeing Tommy's blank expression. "I'm lucky that the ICA gave me somewhere to go or... I'd probably be dead right now. Or worse."

Tommy hums.

"They're shitty to you, you know." He says. Ranboo huffs out his nose.

"I know. I can't do anything about it though, it's them or... nothing."

"I get what you mean," Tommy says, settling back against the wall. "When I first got here I mostly just stayed because where the fuck else would I go, you know? Eventually I got to know the crew and I stayed because I wanted to."

"Where were you before this?" Ranboo asks and immediately knows it was a mistake based on the way Tommy's face screws up in distaste.

"I guess it's only fair to tell you," He sighs. "You told me your tragic backstory."

"You don't have to," Ranboo says quietly. Tommy waves him off.

"It's fine. I'm trying to get over it, what better way to do that than talking about it." Tommy takes a breath and Ranboo settles in for a story.

"I was... I think I had just turned sixteen when I got taken. I was out at night, I think I was walking in the park and took a shortcut home. I got jabbed with some fucking dart and I was out like a light. Whatever they gave me must have been strong, cause I was still loopy when I woke up." Tommy swallows, picking at his nails. "They had a bunch of people- a bunch of humans. All in cages. I was the youngest." Tommy stares at the ground for a second, seemingly collecting himself. "There was...none of them had families, I think. That's why we were taken."

"You didn't have a family on Earth?" Ranboo asks, wincing when he realizes how insensitive of a question that is. Tommy smiles a bit sadly.

"Not on Earth, no. I've got one now, though. So anyway, the aliens that took us wanted to do experiments, I guess. I couldn't understand Common at the time, so a lot of it was guesswork, but they took...samples." Tommy's fingers brush at a large scar on his bicep. "A lot of us died. Most of us were sold off, I think. Eventually, it was just me and my neighbor. They left us together because they found out that humans are social, I guess. Then he died too, and like- it shouldn't have meant anything." Tommy glares at his hands. "I didn't know any of them, really, but- he was *nice*. Probably just cause I was a kid, but he just... never came back one day. He was the closest thing I had to a friend up there, so when he died... that was the last straw."

"What did you do?" Ranboo asks. He knows the answer. He knows what humans are capable of. Tommy smiles, showing teeth. It looks more like a grimace.

"I killed everyone on that ship," Tommy grits out. "All the humans were dead, there was no one good left, I got to the control panel and I crashed it on a random ass planet, the first one I saw."

"No one lived?" Ranboo asks. Tommy sighs.

"No one but me, big man." He mutters, rubbing at his eyes. "I'm not proud of what I did, but I don't regret it. I had to-"

"You don't need to justify it to me," Ranboo mutters. "They were terrible, they did evil, evil things. You did what you had to do."

Tommy swallows and looks down.

"Thanks." He says after a while. "You're not so bad for someone with *boob* in their name."

"That's not-"

"Anyway," Tommy interrupts, clapping his hands together. "Here's the plan. I'm not wanting to leave you in the dark. None of us want to leave you in here longer than we have to. Phil keeps picking at his feathers from the guilt, it's annoying to have to pick them up everywhere I go, so you're not staying here for very long."

Ranboo sighs, relieved.

"Pay attention bitch," Tommy gripes. "I'm gonna be giving reports in your voice for the foreseeable future, so you can't snitch to your lame-ass school. You'll be getting pretty much whatever you ask for, as long as you can't use it to break out. Phil is going to be a total *dad* to you, so definitely take advantage of that."

Ranboo laughs, making Tommy smile. It's hard to be scared around Tommy, despite his status as 'unkillable cryptid', not when he's cracking jokes at every turn.

"You'll have guards and stuff, which will probably be me most of the time since I'm the only one without a real job on the ship. You cool with that?"

"Yeah, that's fine," Ranboo says, surprisingly honest. He'd rather that than be alone.

"Cool," Tommy stands and moves to the door. "I'm gonna sleep in the hallway, Phil set up a little bed out there for me. Knock on the wall if you need anything."

And with that, the human is out of the cell, shutting the door behind him and leaving Ranboo in the dim light of the overhead.

Ranboo rolls over and grabs his book, writing down everything they had talked about so he doesn't forget it. When the enderian is finished recounting everything, it's nearly morning, but he doesn't feel much guilt about sleeping in since he's locked in a cell anyway. Ranboo snaps the book shut and places it underneath the bed.

When he sleeps, he doesn't dream.

Chapter End Notes

writes dialogue writes dialogue writes dialouge

Ranboos tragic backstory is revealed! At least to those who didnt see it on my tumblr ;]

The discord link is in the notes below! Also my tumblr if you want to see some bonus content for this au

Remember to comment! Its the best way to get more writing faster!

Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

no chapter warnings this time. its much much lighter than the last few chapters

also sorry it's been a couple days I've been busy

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Ranboo wakes up to the door being clear again. He startles, mind not yet caught up to the events of yesterday, and flounders at being in a cell. He takes a few deep breaths and reaches for his journal, flipping through the pages filled with the events of yesterday. He relaxes once he remembers, letting out a relieved breath. Someone clears their throat at the door, and Ranboo startles, gaze snapping to the door.

Tubbo stands on the other side, looking tense. He's holding... something in his hands.

"Hi," Ranboo greets timidly.

"Hey," Tubbo says quietly, stepping forward. "I came to apologize."

Ranboo is quiet, and there is a long, uncomfortable moment where the two just stand on opposite sides of the invisible door, Ranboo staring at Tubbo in surprise, Tubbo staring at the ground and shuffling where he stands. The apisaids take a breath.

"I was cruel to you, and that was wrong." He says, directing his gaze somewhere over Ranboo's shoulder. "You- you didn't deserve that."

"Did Tommy put you up to this?" Ranboo asks, a bit bitterly. Tubbo shakes his head, a human gesture that no longer confuses Ranboo.

"He- not really, no. He told me I was being a dick, but I was going to apologize either way. He's right. I was a dick to you. I was scared you were going to get Tommy taken away, but that's not... it still wasn't right to trick you into giving Tommy your voice, and it wasn't right to yell at you like I did. I'm sorry, Ranboo, I really am."

Ranboo is silent for a few seconds, and then he smiles.

"I forgive you," He says, pinning his ears back and ducking his head. Tubbo heaves out a sigh of relief.

"Okay good," He says, collapsing onto the ground and pulling out a pad of paper. "Because we need to figure out a way to get you not to spill about Tommy." Ranboo opens his mouth to interject, but Tubbo seems to remember the paper-wrapped package at his side and jolts up in realization.

"Oh shit, I forgot I brought this for you," Tubbo says, pressing a few buttons on the control panel outside the cell and shoving the package through the door. Ranboo grabs it off the floor and tears it open, revealing a... chunk of dirt.

"What is this?" Ranboo asks, turning it over in his hands. A couple of packets fall out.

"Some gardening stuff. There isn't enough information about enderians to know how you apologize, but Tommy suggested gifts, so... now you can grow flowers in your cell."

Ranboo picks up one of the packets and reads it over, it's slated to grow some sort of flower he's never heard of. It actually *could* be kind of nice to have something to do in here other than write and stare at the wall.

"Thanks," Ranboo says. Tubbo smiles and ducks his head.

Their tentative peace is broken by Tommy thundering down the hall, nearly colliding with Tubbo before the apisaids leaps into the air, causing the human to overshoot and go crashing onto the metal floor. Ranboo winces at the dull thud Tommy's body makes when it hits the ground, but the human gets right back up on his feet with a laugh.

"You bitch," Tommy says around a breathy laugh. "You fucking juked me!"

"You were trying to tackle me!" Tubbo defends. Tommy turns to Ranboo, face red from exertion, though he's still smiling brightly. Ranboo tries not to let the exposed teeth freak him out too much.

"Whose side are you on, Ranboob?" Tommy asks. Ranboo startles, not having expected to be drawn into the argument for seemingly no reason. Neither of them look genuinely mad, though, so hopefully Ranboo won't be fucking himself over if he answers wrong.

"Uh, Tommy *did* try to tackle Tubbo for no reason?" Ranboo says nervously. Tommy groans and lays back on the floor, breathing heavily.

"Wow. Betrayed after that whole bonding moment we had. What the fuck."

"You two were bonding without me?" Tubbo asks, pouting. "

"You were too busy being a dick to our new guest." Tommy shoots back.

"I apologized!" Tubbo insists. Ranboo is quick to interrupt, not eager for an actual fight to break out between the two of them. He isn't sure the ship would survive something like that.

"So- uh, you mentioned finding out ways to get me not to tell anyone about Tommy?" Ranboo blurts out, desperate to change the subject. Tubbo's attention is turned to him, thankfully.

"Right," Tubbo says, clapping his hands together and setting his notepad back on his lap. "Let's brainstorm."

Two hours have passed with no progress, and Ranboo has taken to lying upside down on his cot and seeing how dizzy he can get without blacking out.

"What if we...sue the school and get it shut down?" Tubbo suggests, chewing on the end of his pen. Tommy makes an unsure sound from where he is attempting to jump high enough to touch the ceiling. He's actually making pretty good progress. It's kinda cool.

"I don't know shit about space law, big man," Tommy argues.

"It's not like you'd be the one suing." Tubbo defends.

"Look me in the eye and tell me anyone on this ship knows anything about the legal system."

Tubbo goes back to writing.

"I mean, you could always just send me back and be done with it," Ranboo suggests for the fourth time. He's pretty sure all the blood is rushing to his head, and he kind of wonders if it's turning the white side of his face purple. "Nah," Tubbo and Tommy say in unison.

"Worth a try," Ranboo mutters. He's starting to see black spots dance in front of his vision, so he swings himself back into a seated position, shaking off the wave of vertigo that overtakes him.

Tubbo's comm beeps and the apisaid curses quietly when he checks it.

"Shit, we've gotta give another report," Tubbo says, pulling out Ranboo's recording device and moving to hand it to Tommy. The human takes it, staring at the black box with a conflicted expression.

"Hey, are you like... good with us doing this here? It's probably weird to hear your own voice- or like, something close to it."

Ranboo dips his head, a bit touched that Tommy cares about his opinion. He takes a moment to think about it.

"I think... it's kinda... cool? I guess? I mean, mimicry is one of the weirder things about humans, at least by galactic standards, and it's kinda neat to hear something that I've only ever learned about."

Tommy smiles, without teeth this time, and gives the report.

They have to keep re-recording it because Tommy says absolutely *wild* things in Ranboo's voice that have both the other teenagers rolling with laughter, and then soon enough it catches and Tommy is laughing too, and obviously, they can't send *that* to the school.

"No, no wait hold on, what about this one," Tommy says, choking on his laughter, waving them to be quiet. "Hey this is Ranboo of the ICA reporting in, there are *so* many women here. Like, an insane amount of women. Just crazy stuff. There are boobs in my face twenty-four-seven, which is weird because I'm so stupidly tall. The ladies here- let me tell ya' we had to get new ceilings for these-"

"Stop, stop-" Ranboo gasps, clutching his stomach where a stitch has formed thanks to his uproarious laughter. "What if you accidentally send it!"

"That would be *so* funny!" Tubbo shrieks.

"No!" Ranboo wails, flopping over on his cot, though his whole frame shakes with giggles. "You're gonna ruin my- my reputation!"

"I'm gonna send it." Tommy teases, Ranboo sits up with a horrified gasp.

"No! Stop, stop you're gonna get me in so much trouble!" He shrieks, wishing that the transparent door was gone so Ranboo could wrestle away the recorder from Tommy. Well, maybe wrestling a human isn't a great idea, but he could at least try to plead it back into his possession.

"Fine, fine you pussy, I'll delete it." Tommy gripes. He clicks the record button and lifts it back up to his mouth. "This is Ranboo of the ICA reporting in. Everything is great here, five-star service. Again, passing through an asteroid field so the audio might sound a little strange." He ends the recording and sends it.

"I don't talk like that," Ranboo says, setting his head on his folded arms. Tommy sticks his tongue out at him, a gesture the enderian is yet familiar with.

"My mimicry skills are great bitch," Tommy replies. "I think dinner is soon. Tubbo, stay with Ranboo, I wanna eat with him. You stay too, or you're a pussy."

Tommy gets up to get dinner and Tubbo gives him a thumbs up, a sign Ranboo has learned means 'good' or 'approval'. Ranboo feels a little warmed that he won't have to eat dinner alone in his cell.

"I think... I think I can convince Phil to let you out of the cell tonight." Tubbo says once Tommy is gone down the hall. Ranboo sits up so fast he nearly knocks his head on the wall.

"What?" He gasps, eyes wide with shock. Tubbo purses his lips.

"I mean, as long as Tommy keeps the recording device, I really don't see the harm in it. You'd probably be able to stay out of the cell as long as you didn't try to contact the school. I mean- I have to talk to Phil, obviously, but- yeah."

There are a few seconds of silence in which Ranboo tries to wrap his head around what Tubbo is telling him.

"Really?" He asks, voice childish in its hopefulness.

"Yeah," Tubbo says. Ranboo looks at his face for the first time since he'd been locked up. The apisaids look tired. It occurs to Ranboo suddenly how stressful Ranboo's presence must have been for the other teenager. From the moment he'd arrived Tubbo had seemed nervous and stressed, always waiting for something bad to happen. Of course, Tubbo's actions the night before hadn't been justified, but they are... understandable given the circumstances. Ranboo really does forgive him.

"I- I'm not going to tell the ICA about Tommy," Ranboo promises quietly. Tubbo gives him a tired smile.

"I'm not the one you'll have to convince." Tubbo says. "When I get Phil to let you out, you're going to have to make a case to him, Wilbur, and Techno. They're all stupidly protective of Tommy, but... I don't know." Tubbo sighs. "Wilbur seems to like you, and Phil feels like shit about locking up *another* innocent teenager. Techno might be a little harder to convince, but if the others agree to let you go then he'll cave. He's surprisingly susceptible to peer pressure."

Ranboo opens his mouth, to thank Tubbo or further plead his case he isn't sure, but he doesn't get the chance to say anything at all before Tommy comes barreling back down the hall, three plates balanced precariously on his arms.

" *DINNER !*" He bellows, beaming.

Tubbo and Tommy end up eating in the cell with Ranboo. They talk and laugh and Tommy steals pieces of their food off of their plates. Or at least he does until he takes something from Ranboo, and nearly cracks his tooth biting into a bone.

Tommy cusses furiously from the ball he's curled up in.

"Why do you eat the *bones* ?" He hisses.

"I don't eat the bones!" Ranboo defends. "I bite the bones open and eat the *marrow* !"

"That's not better." Tommy groans, holding his jaw.

Either humans heal faster than Ranboo had thought, or Tommy was playing up his injury for attention, because Tommy goes right back to eating after only a few minutes of complaining about Ranboo's diet. Ranboo is willing to bet it's the attention thing.

Tubbo leaves once he's done eating, saying he's going to go talk to Phil. Tommy stays seated, not having finished his meal. He isn't making passes to grab Ranboo's meal anymore, so the enderian at least doesn't have to worry about defending his meal from a human anymore.

Tommy still rubs his jaw from time to time and shoots Ranboo with a glare, but Ranboo finds it more funny than intimidating, somehow.

After a few minutes of remarkable silence from Tommy, likely only due to the fact that his mouth is full, Tubbo's footsteps come pounding back down the hall. Ranboo hears it first, ears standing straight up and twisting towards the noise. Tommy looks up with his mouth full, confused at his reaction, before he hears Tubbo too.

The apisaid bursts into the cell with a wide grin, tapping a few buttons on the control panel. The door shimmers and disappears. Ranboo stands, not ready to get his hopes up quite yet.

"You're out, bossman!" Tubbo says with a grin so wide it pushes his eyes mostly shut. "You've got the go-ahead from the captain."

Ranboo nearly sobs in relief, tripping over his feet in his haste to get *out* .

And he does.

He's in the hallway, and by all accounts, the air is the same. The ventilation system in the cell had been top-notch, but the air somehow feels cleaner here. Cooler. There is no fresh air in space, but if there was, it would be here, in this hallway.

Tommy hands him his book, and Ranboo thanks him quietly. He didn't want to go back in and get it. He never wants to go in there again. He wonders if Tommy hated being in there too, going back to a place he was trapped in not even three months ago. Ranboo appreciates the human keeping him company even more now.

"Come on," Tubbo says brightly, tugging on his hand. "Let's go get you set up in your room again and we can give you an *actual* tour of the ship now that we're not hiding Tommy."

The ship is... actually really cool once he's given a proper tour and not just a disinterested walk around the perimeter. Tommy and Tubbo show him the vents that Tommy had been hanging out in since Ranboo arrived, though Ranboo can't fit inside of them due to his horns, which gives all of them a good laugh.

They steal food from the kitchen and get caught by Wilbur, who chases after them. Ranboo's heart sinks in dread until he registers that Tommy and Tubbo's shrieks are ones of mirth and Wilbur is wearing a wide, mischievous smile as he darts after them.

They hide in a closet, the same one Ranboo had teleported Tubbo into on his... second day? He can't quite remember, and it's far too cramped in the closet to attempt to check his journal. They're all giggling, flushed and shushing each other when they hear Wilbur call for them, joking anger in his tone.

When Wilbur hears Tommy swearing at Tubbo for stepping on his foot and rips the door open with a toothy smile, they all shriek and rush out of the closet. Ranboo goes down right away, legs numb from how he was crouched. Wilbur shouts victoriously and moves to his next target, Tommy, who he tackles to the ground. Tommy shrieks in rage, struggling under Wilbur. Tubbo immediately comes to his friend's aid, tugging at the phantling's arms as he laughs maniacally.

The wrestling match grinds to a halt when Techno clears his throat from the end of the hall, making Wilbur stand and lean against the wall casually.

"Hey, Technoblade..." He drawls with a slightly nervous smile.

"Aren't you supposed to be the good influence?" Techno asks dryly. Wilbur squawks, offended.

"I *am* a good influence," He sniffs, turning toward the teenagers. "Isn't that right boys."

None of them answer, causing Wilbur to huff dramatically.

"You're all ungrateful brats," He mutters. Tommy nods in agreement.

"Tommy, Tubbo, take Ranboo to his room, it's getting late." Techno commands. Tubbo and Tommy both groan, but Ranboo only pins his ears back respectfully and begins following the two other teenagers to his room.

He opens the door and falls onto the bed, nearly melting into it, overjoyed at the prospect of once again having a bed that fits his frame.

He is pulled out of his bliss by Tubbo climbing into his bed as well and nestling against his side.

"What are you doing?" Ranboo asks, bewildered.

"We are having a sleepover!" Tubbo announces with an air of finality that Ranboo doesn't dare refuse. Tommy rolls his eyes but awkwardly climbs into the bed as well, leaving Tubbo in between both of them. "Humans are pack sleepers," Tubbo stage whispers. "He can't sleep on his own, and he's a cudd-" Tommy slaps a hand over Tubbo's mouth, silencing him but not nearly being hard enough to hurt.

"Okay, that's enough of that," Tommy gripes face turning an interesting shade of red. Ranboo should ask about that sometime. Tommy rolls and tugs the blanket up to his chin. Ranboo chuckles at the antics, but he can't sleep yet.

He pulls out his journal and begins writing down the events of the day. Today had been... *good* . Somehow. He's out of the cell and he seems to *actually* be making friends with Tommy and Tubbo. The other three crew members are still on the fence, but he can still try. Or at least get them to *tolerate* him while he's here.

Once he's finished detailing the events of the day, he blows the ink dry and shuts the book, setting it on his bedside table and falling asleep to the dull glow of a nightlight. Huh. He was pretty sure that hadn't been there before.

Well, the dull blue glow painted across the backs of his eyelids does dispel any similarity to the void. It's nice.

He sleeps easy, despite the fact that he's sharing a bed with one of the most dangerous predators on this side of the galaxy.

if you liked this chapter leave a comment, it's a surefire way to get more writing faster!

also join the discord with the link in the below authors note, I'm hosting a contest this month with legitamitly really cool prizes so get in on that. also check out my tumblr for more content on this au

xoxxo

-rat

Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Ranboo wakes with a jolt, a nightmare he can barely remember scratching at the bare edges of his consciousness. Endless darkness, oppressive and whispering in his ears. Ranboo's hands come up to tug at his ears, eager to silence it.

A hand wraps around his wrist and pulls it back down. Ranboo startles at the interruption and sees blue eyes glaring at him tiredly.

"Stop that shit," Tommy mutters, closing his eyes but not letting go of Ranboo's arm. "Go back to bed."

Ranboo tries to remove his arm from Tommy's grip, but the human only holds on tighter in response to his attempts to free himself. Ranboo sighs, accepting defeat and settling back down. Tommy's hands are warm, his body running a lot hotter than Ranboo's. The heated pressure is grounding. Ranboo watches over the course of the next few minutes as Tommy settles back into sleep. Even while unconscious, the human doesn't let go of his arm. After several minutes, Ranboo relinquishes it to Tommy's whims with a sigh and tries to fall back asleep.

It takes a while, terror still swirling in the darker recesses of his mind, memories of things he wishes he was able to forget tugging at the corners of his mind.

When he does finally manage to sleep again, the nightmares return, but whenever he wakes with a gasp or a whine, the hand around his arm tightens, grounding him, allowing him to slip back to the warm embrace of sleep.

When morning comes, Ranboo barely remembers it, only recalling waking up at all by the fact that Tommy still has his arm in a vice grip. Ranboo lays there for a while, listening to the other two's breathing and letting his mind wander as he slowly wakes up.

His peace is broken when he hears the door open. He can't sit up all the way, but he raises his head to look at the door. It's Phil, holding Ranboo's mini-garden and looking at him in soft

surprise. He sets the soil and seed packets down by the door and moves to walk closer to the bed. Ranboo flinches back, and the captain hesitates before going still.

"I wasn't expecting you to be awake," Phil says softly, mindful of the other two people still asleep in the room. Ranboo shrugs, not really sure where he stands with the elytrian. "I wanted to apologize properly for everything you've been through while you were here." Phil says, leaning against the doorframe. Ranboo watches him tentatively.

"I panicked when you found Tommy, I was irresponsible as a captain *and* as your temporary guardian." Phil says. "Locking you up was a rash decision, and it was not one I should have made. In all honesty, even if you did tell the Academy about Tommy, I would probably be able to smooth things over."

Ranboo swallows, looking down at his hands.

"You don't have to forgive me," Phil says softly. "Not now, not ever. You can go back to the school whenever you're ready to." The captain looks a bit pained then, staring out the window and towards the passing stars. "Though... Ranboo, do they treat you well?"

Ranboo bites his tongue.

"They are... I have a home there." Ranboo says, quiet.

"They've given you a place to stay, food, water- Ranboo, that's bare minimum." Phil points out. A strange surge of defensiveness rises up in Ranboo.

"Well, that's more than anyone else has given me." Ranboo snaps. Tubbo shifts in his sleep and Ranboo tamps down his emotions, quieting. Phil sighs.

"You could stay here, if you wanted." Phil offers. "We could use a diplomat."

Ranboo is quiet.

Living on the SBI would be... wonderful, more than he would ever deserve, but...

"No," Ranboo says, finally bringing his gaze up to Phil. "If I- If I stay... the school will send someone else. I'd be putting all of you in danger."

Phil gives him a sad look, but he doesn't argue.

"The offer stands," He says, turning back to the door. "Breakfast is in half an hour, try to wake the others up if you can."

The captain walks down the hall, and Ranboo nearly bursts into tears the moment he hears his footsteps retreat. He's *actually* going to be allowed to go back to the school. He could go back *today* if he wanted to. His emotional outburst is only halted when he catches Tommy watching him tiredly.

"You're really gonna go back to that shitty school?" He mutters sleepily. Ranboo winces.

"You heard that?"

"Light sleeper. You could be happy here, you know." Tommy says with a strangely casual air, as though he's discussing the weather and not something Ranboo has been seeking for the better part of five years. Ranboo clenches his jaw.

"I don't think... I don't think I can be happy anywhere." Ranboo breathes. Tommy is quiet for a moment.

"You could learn how to be happy. And at least here you wouldn't be treated like shit."

Ranboo gives him a look.

"Anymore," Tommy corrects with a slightly guilty smile. Ranboo laughs despite himself.

"I appreciate the offer, but... no. That would put all of you in danger. I'm not worth that."

Tommy frowns, but before he can argue, Tubbo wakes up with a groan and promptly tells them to shut the fuck up.

It's Ranboo's first meal with Tommy and the rest of the crew, and it goes... surprisingly well. Tubbo's prediction had been correct, with Ranboo having seemingly won over both Wilbur and Phil, Techno had seemed to accept his presence, aside from a few suspicious glares here and there.

Most of the meal consists of laughter and talking, which is a pleasant change from the tense awkwardness of before. Tommy's presence adds a brightness to the meal that Ranboo hadn't even realized was missing.

Breakfast very nearly ends in a food fight that has Ranboo hiding under the table, though it's shut down when Techno grabs Tommy by the back of his shirt and hauls him away from Wilbur, the target of his attack, much to the human's dismay.

Once the meal is finished and only a small amount of food has been thrown at other crewmates, Phil collects all the dishes and strongarms Wilbur into helping him clean up, ignoring the phantling's loud complaints. Phil sends Ranboo, Tommy, and Tubbo off to do as they please, which Tommy and Tubbo both agree to easily.

Tubbo and Tommy drag him off to cause more mischief, presumably, and they end up at Wilbur's lab. Ranboo hesitates before going in, remembering the rules that he had written in his book. He's mostly sure one of them was not to go into Wilbur's lab.

"Oh come on," Tubbo says, tugging his arm and draggin the enderian into the lab. "The only reason he even had that rule was because you would have seen a bunch of human medicine and stuff. You're not gonna get in trouble."

Ranboo sighs and allows himself to be manhandled into the lab. Though his nervousness that Wilbur is going to walk in and yell at them doesn't really ever fade, it is dulled when Tubbo shows him the greenhouse. He gets too distracted by the array of beautiful flowers and thick leaves to be worried about getting in trouble.

"Damn Ranboob," Tommy chortles as Ranboo gently pokes at a red flower. "You act like you've never seen a garden before."

"I kinda... haven't?" Ranboo admits. Tommy makes a confused sound and Ranboo is quick to elaborate. "I mean- we have farms on Enderia, obviously, but they're only to grow food, we don't really have flowers like this, we didn't eat them like Tubbo does. There was no point."

"There's a point," Tommy argues, frowning. "It's pretty, innit?"

"That's- enderians aren't really too focused on that kind of thing, really if it's not practical it gets stamped out." Ranboo says. A hand comes up to brush self-consciously at the white half of his face and he frowns.

"Forget about them," Tubbo says, throwing an arm around him. If he was tall enough, he would be throwing an arm around his shoulder, but Tubbo can't reach past his waist, so

Ranboo allows him to loop an arm around his upper-leg, stifling a laugh at the slightly ridiculous position. Tommy has no qualms hiding his laughter.

"You look so tiny next to him," Tommy says around his laughter. Tubbo sticks his tongue out at the human.

"Oh come *on* , he's like ten feet tall. You're short next to him too."

"I'm not *that* tall," Ranboo mutters. The two other teenagers give him flat looks, and Ranboo shrinks under their gazes. "For an enderian anyway." He finishes lamely.

Ranboo spends the next few hours listening to Tubbo explain the uses and biological functions of each plant. Tommy seems bored by it, coming in and out of the greenhouse to entertain himself with other things, but Ranboo is enraptured by Tubbo's explanation. He hadn't even known plants could *be* this beautiful, he had never seen anything but fruits and vegetables that were grown to feed their livestock, and none of them were half as vibrant as the ones housed here, on this ship.

"How are you able to keep them alive up here?" Ranboo asks, voice quiet with what could almost be described as reverence.

"Patience," Tubbo responds with a breathy laugh. "This isn't their ideal conditions, obviously, but we always make it work. They really *can* thrive if you just give them what they need."

"Can I move my flowers here when I leave? I don't think the ICA will let me take it back with me." Ranboo asks, eyes tracing the variegated leaf of a flower from Tubbo's home planet. Tubbo frowns.

"You're leaving? When?" He asks, sounding upset. Ranboo winces internally. He had forgotten that he hadn't yet told Tubbo he'd been given the clear to leave by Phil.

"I don't know yet, I'll need to go soon. The school might send-"

"Another inspector," Tubbo finishes, sounding exhausted. He sits down heavily on an overturned crate and buries his face in his hands. "Fuck."

Ranboo nods, sharing the apisaids' sentiment. He opens his mouth, though he doesn't know what he's going to say. Perhaps he was going to comfort Tubbo. He doesn't get the chance to say anything, because Tommy bursts back into the room, eyes wide and terrified. Tubbo is immediately on his feet, and Ranboo tenses, standing on guard.

"The ICA is *calling* ," Tommy hisses, pupils constricted with stress. Ranboo gasps, reaching for the comm on instinct. Tommy hands it to him without argument, to Ranboo's surprise. He would have thought Tommy would still be suspicious of him.

"Take it, I can't do your voice for that long. Just- just please don't tell them about me."
Tommy pleads, eyes wide. Ranboo nods.

"I won't," He promises. He draws his hand up to his mouth and draws it along his lips before making a flicking motion away from his face. "Locking my lips and throwing away the key, right? I won't tell a soul."

Tommy's face collapses into relief, and he lets out a small, breathy laugh.

"Thank you," He breathes. Ranboo answers the call.

"Hello?" He asks tentatively. Tommy is pale from where Ranboo watches from across the room.

"Ranboo, hello, this is your dean." Says Mx. Coatilt, voice tinny through the comm.

"Oh, hi." Ranboo says nervously. He hopes they haven't noticed something wrong with his voice and become suspicious.

"I'm just calling in to let you know that you've completed your assignment there, and you'll be coming back to the ICA tomorrow morning. I'll be sending someone to pick you up."

Ranboo's heart drops into his stomach. He stumbles backwards, falling to sit on the floor.

"What?" He asks, mouth suddenly dry. "Already?"

"Well, you've been giving your reports for a while now, and everything seems good. Why wait?"

"But-"

"You've done what we needed you to do, Ranboo. It's time to come home."

The ICA isn't home. Ranboo was ready to back *eventually* , in some distant time on some random day in the future. He wasn't ready to leave. He didn't want to go.

"Alright." He breathes. He has no choice. "What- what time?"

"Sometime early morning," The dean says dismissively. "Thank you for your reports Ranboo."

The line goes dead.

Ranboo drops the comm out of his slack hands and bursts into tears.

Tubbo and Tommy are both by his side in a matter of moments, Tubbo pressing a cloth to his face so he doesn't burn himself with his tears.

"Hey, it's okay," Tubbo says, though he doesn't sound like he believes it himself. "It's fine, we'll- we'll call you every day, okay? We'll make sure they're not mistreating you again."

"And if they do I'll come there and kick their asses," Tommy says. Ranboo laughs wetly at the pair's attempts to cheer him up.

"I don't want to go back yet," Ranboo admits weakly. Tubbo wraps his arms around the endreian's middle, burying his face in Ranboo's short fur.

"It's gonna be okay bossman," Tubbo promises. Tommy nods in agreement.

They sit there for a while in silence, Ranboo trying to stifle his tears, staring at the flowers around him.

He's going to miss them.

Once the tears have finally stopped flowing, they all get up to tell the other crew members of this new development. They walk through the main body of the ship like they are walking a funeral march, dread lining every step.

Phil turns to greet them when they enter the control room, though his expression turns to one of concern the moment he catches the expressions on their faces.

"What happened?" He asks, getting to his feet. It takes everything in Ranboo not to burst into tears again, the fact that Phil cares enough to look worried for him breaking his heart open all over again.

"The school called," Tommy says grimly. Phil's wings flare, and his face turns terrified. He smooths his expression down and lays his feathers flat.

"Do they know about Tommy?" He asks. Tommy shakes his head and Phil lets out a shuddering breath of relief, collapsing back into his chair.

"What did they want?" Phil asks warily.

"They're coming to pick Ranboo up tomorrow morning." Tubbo explains softly. Phil sucks in a sharp breath.

"Oh shit," He mutters, eyes shifting over to Ranboo, empathy bright in his eyes. "Come here, mate."

The elytrian opens his arms and Ranboo lets out a dry sob and practically falls forwards into the captain's arms. He clutches onto the loose cloak as though it's the only thing keeping him on the ground, burying his face in the elytrian's shoulder. Phil makes a gentle cooing sound, something Ranboo knows they do to soothe their young, and it takes all of Ranboo's restraint to stop himself from crying and burning himself further. Phil's dark wings wrap around his trembling frame, blocking out the world. The darkness it brings doesn't terrify him like it usually does, instead it is somehow comforting. Safe.

Ranboo lets out a trembling warble, and Phil's wings wrap even more tightly around him.

"It's going to be okay," Phil promises quietly.

Ranboo would give anything to believe him.

Chapter End Notes

YOU THOUGHT RANBOO FINDING TOMMY WOULD BE THE MAIN CONFLICT OF THE STORY HAHAAHSHASHAHHAHAH THAT WAS FAR FROM THE WORST THING THATS GOING TO HAPPEN TO HIM!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

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Chapter 9

Chapter Summary

sorry that this chapter is a little short! I had a specific place I wanted to leave off so it got cut a bit, but I think its worth it :)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The rest of the day passes somberly. The crew helps him gather his things together, though he didn't have much. Only the comm provided by the school and a few sets of identical uniforms. Wilbur hands him his book with a sad smile.

"Keep writing everything down," He urges. "Don't let them take advantage of you anymore, okay?."

Ranboo nods, throat feeling suspiciously thick.

Once all of Ranboo's things have been gathered and set at the end of his bed, ready to be grabbed at a moment's notice, it's time for dinner.

It is a lot less joyous than breakfast had been.

There is no laughter and very little talking besides subdued requests to pass some of a certain dish. Ranboo does his best to savor the food, unsure of when he'll get an opportunity to eat something made specifically for *him* again. Probably not for a long time.

When dinner is over Tommy and Tubbo clear their plates without a word. Ranboo follows suit and begins the walk to his room, not entirely surprised that the other two teenagers are following close at his heels. If this really *is* his last night on the Sleepy Bois' Inc then Ranboo would like to continue their short-lived tradition of 'sleepovers'. It's nice to know that he can sleep without fear of being attacked while he rests, not with Tommy sleeping mere feet away.

He supposes he shouldn't get used to it.

Ranboo does not sleep. He lays on his back and stares at the ceiling, mind full of static. Tommy isn't asleep either, laying on his side, blue eyes open. Tubbo is turned away from Ranboo, so he can't be sure, but the apisaids' breathing is too quick and stilted for him to be truly sleeping.

"We can still figure something out," Tommy says, breaking the hours-long silence and dispelling the air that had been heavy with dread. Ranboo frowns.

"In a way that can be done by morning and won't screw all of you over?" Ranboo asks, turning to look at Tommy. The human frowns but doesn't argue.

"It's really... not that bad." Ranboo sighs. Tommy's face twitches.

"They treat you like shit," Tommy says. "They tricked you, they *used* you. Why wouldn't they send a *real* inspector?"

"Be glad they didn't, a real inspector would have turned you in." Ranboo reminds him. Tommy is not appeased.

"That's the *point* !" Tommy says loudly, sitting up. Tubbo sits up too, evidently Ranboo had been right about him faking sleep. "What if this place *had* been a death trap, huh? Then you'd be fucked over too!"

Ranboo watches his hands, suddenly very enthralled by the way the sheets twist around his fingers.

"They gave me a home-" Ranboo defends.

"They gave you a *dorm* room," Tommy spits. "And they treated you like shit. Did you *ever* feel at home there?"

"I've never felt at home *anywhere* , okay!" Ranboo snaps, whipping around to face Tommy, who draws back, eyes wide at his outburst. "Stop *pushing* ! I- I don't have a choice, I've

never *had* a choice! I'm pushed wherever people want me to go, that's just how my life *is* , so please. Just- just stop making this harder than it already is."

Ranboo turns back around, pulling his blanket up to his throat and facing the wall. He hears Tommy lie back down too, and Tubbo presses further into his side.

He doesn't sleep.

When the artificial sun rises, so does Ranboo, climbing over the others so as not to wake them, and heads to the control panel to wait for the ICA to send a pilot to pick him up.

Phil is standing at the helm, skillfully landing the SBI on some docking planet. There is barely any shaking as they breach the atmosphere. Ranboo rumbles in his chest, admiration for Phil's piloting skills coming to the front of his mind. He appreciates the brief distraction, but once the ship is firmly on the ground again he remembers why they're on the planet to begin with and his spirits sink again.

He sits beside Phil in silence, watching the sunrise. The morning is quiet for a bare few minutes before crashing sounds from somewhere deep in the ship, and then there are thundering footsteps rushing towards the control room. Ranboo stands, immediately on guard, but Phil only chuckles softly, apparently used to this.

Tubbo and Tommy burst into the room, Tommy red-faced with exhaustion and Tubbo hovering over him, wings beating furiously to keep him in the air.

"Did Ranboo-" Tommy begins frantically, mouth snapping shut when he catches sight of Ranboo standing next to Phil. "Oh, good. We thought you'd left already." Tommy pants, hands on his knees as he attempts to catch his breath.

"No, I... I wanted to see the sunrise." Ranboo explains quietly. Tommy takes a few more deep breaths and walks up to the viewing window that curves over the wall and shows the thickly forested planet ahead of them. Ranboo turns to finish watching the sunrise. It's almost fully in the sky.

It would be beautiful if not for the pit of dread it places in Ranboo's stomach.

Tommy sits beside him, and Tubbo beside Phil. None of them speak. After a few minutes, Wilbur joins them, still in his sleep-clothes, with Techno following close behind, a red blanket wrapped around his shoulders.

After a few minutes, the entire crew is sitting in a line, holding onto each other and watching the sunrise.

None of them speak, just watch the pink sun lift higher and higher into the milky sky until it illuminates the tops of the trees that tower around them, spilling light onto their faces, casting neat squares in a grid over the floor of the control room. It's beautiful. It's terrifying.

Phil's comm buzzes, breaking the silence and making everyone jump. Phil looks at the comm, face lined with a grim frown.

"They're here," He says to Ranboo. The enderian nods, standing to his full height and following the captain to the docking bay. The rest of the crew trails after them, apparently not yet ready to let Ranboo out of their sight. Ranboo rests a hand on his book, he wants to be sure he won't leave without it.

Ranboo stands at the door and Phil presses a series of buttons on a small control panel set into the wall. The door opens, and the ramp lowers. At the bottom is the same ship that took him here, the same pilot too. He's standing beside the smaller ship, gesturing for Ranboo to hurry up.

The enderian ignores him, turning to face the crew for the last time in who knows how long.

"This isn't goodbye forever," Tubbo says, his eyes shining with determination as he looks up at Ranboo. "When you graduate- or- or if you ever decide to leave, you'll always have a home here, okay?"

"Okay," Ranboo breathes, leaning down to wrap the apisaide in a careful hug.

"Hurry it up," The pilot says gruffly. "We've gotta get back to the academy by noon."

Ranboo takes a shuddering breath and releases Tubbo, giving the rest of the crew a longing look. Phil smiles at him, sad but reassuring all the same. Ranboo takes two steps backwards down the ramp, and then he turns to the pilot.

"You ready to go kid?" He asks. Ranboo nods. He's not, but saying so would change nothing. "Alright, get in."

Ranboo does, having to contort his body slightly to fit in the too-small cockpit. The door closes with a hiss, and then he is watching the crew from the other side of a tinted window. They are standing in a group and waving at him. Ranboo tentatively waves back.

The pilot climbs into the seat next to his, and then the ship rumbles, and they are in the air. The accent isn't nearly as smooth as Phil's had been, and Ranboo has to hold onto his seat to keep from slamming his head into the dashboard. He watches the SBI grow smaller and smaller as they breach the atmosphere, and then they are lost beyond a curtain of clouds. After a few minutes, Ranboo can see the curve of the planet, and then it continues to shrink as they draw away from its surface, until it looks like it could fit in Ranboo's palm.

Ranboo turns away, facing the front window. He can't bear to watch it disappear.

"How long until we get to the school?" Ranboo asks quietly. The pilot hums.

"A few hours." He answers shortly. Ranboo looks back out the window, pressing his forehead against the cool glass.

He sits like that for hours, staring blankly at the void that encases the tiny ship. Time passes without him as Ranboo keeps his mind carefully blank, afraid that if he allows himself to think, to feel, he will break down completely.

When Ranboo begins to think again, he has the strange realization that he doesn't recognize the star systems that surround him.

"Was I- how long have we been flying?" Ranboo asks tiredly, pawing at his eyes.

"A few hours." The pilot says. Ranboo stares at the emptiness around him. He sees no landmarks, no planets or stars he recognizes.

"Where are we?" Ranboo asks after a long pause. A pit of dread is starting to grow in his stomach. Something feels... off. They aren't heading in the right direction.

"Taking a detour," The pilot says, keeping his eyes straight ahead. "Need to refuel."

Ranboo hums and returns to watching the stars, desperately scanning to see a system he recognizes. Some sign that would tell him where he is.

After another half-an-hour, a planet comes into view, a pale grey with swirling clouds. The ship begins to slow, and Ranboo sags in relief. They really *were* here to refuel. Ranboo picks at his claws. He needs to stop being so paranoid.

The ship descends, rocking furiously. Ranboo holds on to the seat, gritting his teeth so as not to bite his tongue. The ship lands harshly, jolting both of them and sending up a cloud of white dust around them. Ranboo opens his eyes, which had closed in the descent.

There is nothing around them for miles, and certainly not a refueling station.

"Where... where are we?" Ranboo asks, voice rising in pitch to match his fear. The pilot says nothing for a few moments, only stares ahead. Ranboo realizes he hasn't looked at him once for the entire trip.

"I'm sorry kid," The pilot says. Ranboo wants to throw up. This can't be happening. He still doesn't know *what* is happening, but it can't be anything good with the guilt and hard resolve that is painting the pilot's face.

Ranboo's door opens.

"No, *please* ," Ranboo gasps, terror grasping everything in him and pulling every which way.

"It's you or my job, kid. I need the money." The pilot says, he sounds regretful, but he still has that horrible look of *resolve* on his face. The one that tells Ranboo that nothing is going to change the outcome of this.

" *Why?*" Ranboo breathes, trembling.

"C'mon kid, don't play dumb." The pilot says, looking uncomfortable. "You can't even *remember* anything about your magic, what use are you to the ICA? Not even interrogators could get you to crack, they need to cut their losses, and it's gonna look a hell of a lot less bad on the school if you just... wandered off."

"But- I don't understand-"

The pilot plants a boot in the middle of Ranboo's chest, knocking all the wind out of him and sending him out of the ship, slamming onto the dry ground of the planet below. Ranboo lands on his back with a cry, though he quickly scrambles to sit up, reaching for the ship with a desperate hand. The pilot is looking down at him with something akin to pity.

"Sorry kid, if it was up to me this wouldn't be happening. Consider this your expulsion."

The door to the ship shuts with a hiss, and it takes off again, rattling as it ascends into the sky. Ranboo is left on the ground, knees bent underneath him. The hand that was outstretched, reaching for the ship drops to the ground limply. The ship disappears past the clouds, and then Ranboo is alone on an empty planet. Ranboo bends forward, breathing raggedly, and puts his forehead to the ground, trying to process what had just happened.

The clouds split open above him, and it begins to pour.

Chapter End Notes

heehehehehe WHAT A TWIST!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

if you liked this chapter, leave a comment, it's the best way to get more writing faster!
also this was meant to be a six chapter long story and its looking like its gonna be around the same length as home again home again crying and sobbing

if u like this au you can join the discord server (link below) or check out my tumblr for deleted scenes and bonus content!

Chapter 10

Chapter Summary

PLEASE READ WARNINGS

- vomitting
- suicide idealation
- a LOT of death talk

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Ranboo shrieks in pain the moment the water hits his skin, taking ragged, shaking breaths as he scrambles for shelter. He whips his head around, holding his arms above his head to stop the water from hitting his face, from blinding him. He swallows back a whimper at the way his skin sizzles when the water hits it, instead electing to focus on finding a place to hide.

Of course, the academy had chosen to leave him on a planet that seems to be mostly desert and rock- and of course, water. Ranboo gasps when his eyes catch a small outcropping in a stone wall, and he scrambles towards it, stumbling over his feet a few times in his haste. He makes it and collapses on the ground, his entire body trembling as he lays still. He can barely hear the rain over the blood rushing in his ears.

After a few minutes of trying to breathe through the burning pain tracing up his arms and on the top of his head, he manages to sit up, careful to keep himself tucked under the small outcrop.

He stares out at the endless grey sand around him, leafless trees occasionally poking up from the ground. Rain falls as far as the eye can see, infinite sheets of water making small puddles here and there.

Ranboo curls in on himself and screams.

He screams until he's choking on the noise, and then something else is rising in him. He coughs a few times, until he's spitting up stomach acid. He's glad he hadn't eaten breakfast. He spits a few more times to clear his mouth of the taste, and then collapses back onto the ground, careful not to lay in his own sick. Ranboo sobs, uncaring of the burns the tears trace his face. His entire body already hurts, so what's a few more burns.

He lays like that for a while, watching the rain fall as he sobs so hard his entire body is tense. He's going to die here. That is the thought that sticks with him even as his mind spins. He's going to die here and the crew won't know what happened.

Ranboo hopes they never find out. They don't deserve any more grief. If they would have grieved him at all. Ranboo hopes they would, at least he would be missed by someone. It's a little selfish to wish such a terrible emotion on someone, but Ranboo is dying. He's owed a little selfishness after the life he's had.

Ranboo lays there. He thinks. How many times had he been abandoned, sequestered from somewhere he had lived? Never home. Never a *home*, not for people like him. Broken beyond repair.

What is it the pilot had said? Oh, right. *'What use are you?'*

What use was he to his haunting, when they told him in no uncertain terms that he didn't belong among their ranks? What use was he to the school when he refused to tell them the secrets to his magic, to betray the people who hurt him? Who he still held unwavering loyalty towards?

It seems like it's his destiny to be unwanted. To be cast aside.

Ranboo watches the rain. He thinks about what it would feel like to lay in it. To let go.

It would hurt. At first.

Eventually, the pain would fade, and then it wouldn't feel like anything at all.

Ranboo's heard that many species enjoy being out in the rain, that it feels good. He wonders, when the pain fades, if it would feel good to him too. It would be easy, he thinks. All he would have to do is roll out from under the outcrop and close his eyes.

It would be faster than starving to death on this empty planet, after all.

Ranboo sits up, leaning his back against the stone wall. He reaches for his bag and pulls it into his lap, wrapping his arms around it for any semblance of comfort. He doesn't know why the pilot left him his things. A final act of kindness, perhaps. Ranboo can't bring himself to be appreciative, not when the pilot is the one who took him away from the one place he felt like he belonged, just to leave him to die on some desert rock.

Ranboo feels something hard in his bag, and he reaches inside to see what had been left with him. He pulls out his journal and nearly breaks down again. He throws his head back against the wall. It makes a disgusting thudding sound, but it grounds him all the same.

He opens the book. Some of the ink is smudged by water. Ranboo wipes the raindrops away with his thumb, frowning at the way the ink smears under his touch. He looks back out at the rain. He can't lay down in it, he can't let go yet. He doesn't want to get the book wet. It was a gift, after all.

Ranboo flips through the pages, reading his own writing, smiling brokenly at the reminders of how *good* things had been only a few days ago. He wants to do dumb teenage shenanigans with Tubbo and Tommy again, he wants to watch Tubbo piss off Technoblade to no end, he wants Wilbur to teach him the polivive, just to stick it to the Elders back home. He wants to live. He wants. He wants. He wants-

He wants to *live* .

Ranboo sets the book on his lap, having read all that he had written. He can hear the void whispering, shrouded in the pounding of the rain. He ignores it. He reads through the journal

again. And again, and again, anything to distract him from how the rain drips around him, a death sentence.

He closes the book and holds it against his chest.

He watches the rain with quiet acceptance. He isn't making it out of here, but he wants to think on his last few days. His time aboard the SBI had been the best of his life, and he's glad that- if he must die, that his last few days were good ones. He can't help the bitterness from dredging up in him, though. He could have had a good life. He could have been happy if he had just *stayed* .

He shuts his eyes.

Something buzzes in his bag. Ranboo's eyes snap open, reaching for the bag before he even knows what he's doing. He pulls out his comm, the one given to him by the school. Why had they left it for him when they knew he would die? Why give him an out? Ranboo thinks of the guilt on the pilot's face, and he understands.

Ranboo stares at the name scrawled across the cracked screen of the comm.

Phil is calling him.

Oh.

Oh *Void* .

He might actually make it out of here.

He...should probably pick up the phone.

Ranboo presses the 'answer call' button with shaking fingers. The line is quiet for a second, and then Phil speaks, voice crackling with distance.

"Hey mate!" The captain says cheerfully. Ranboo's breath catches in his throat. "Are you back at the academy yet?"

Ranboo bursts into tears.

Phil immediately starts speaking again, faster than before, and Ranboo can hear concerned voices in the background. That only makes him cry harder, the fact that the crew is gathered around the phone. That they had bothered to check on him at all.

"Woah, woah, woah, what's happening?" Phil asks frantically. Ranboo can barely speak around his tears.

"They- I- They- They *left* me, Phil," Ranboo wails. The line goes silent.

"What do you mean they *left you* , Ranboo?" Phil asks, dangerously calm. Ranboo wipes at his face, sniffing.

"The pilot said- said we needed to refuel, but- but when we landed he- he- kicked me out and now I'm *alone* and- Phil, it's raining. I got- I got cover but I'm burned and-" Ranboo takes a shuddering breath. "Phil I'm gonna *die* ." He whispers, curling in on himself with the force of his tears.

"You're not going to die, mate," Phil says steadily, though Ranboo can hear the terror in his voice anyway. "You said you found shelter?"

"Yeah," Ranboo mutters. His terror is exhausting him.

"Good, can you describe the planet you're on?"

"Uh, it's... pale grey. Almost white. It's all- all desert, but there are black trees sometimes. It's... raining."

"Okay," Phil says evenly. "I know where you are. We're coming to get you right now, okay? Just stay out of the rain."

Ranboo hums in agreement. He can hear clamoring on the other end in the background, furious shouting and whispers.

"I'm tired," Ranboo mutters.

"Ranboo, do *not* fall asleep." Phil orders, voice hard. Ranboo jolts at his tone. "That is an order as your captain."

"Yes sir," Ranboo says dazedly. He feels a little warmed that Phil is referring to himself as *Ranboo's* captain. "Will you... will you stay on the phone?"

Phil curses under his breath, and Ranboo wilts.

"I can't, not if I want to get to you fast." He says apologetically. Ranboo feels tears well up again. He doesn't want to be alone. "I can give the comm to one of the others, okay? They'll stay on the line while I fly."

"Okay," Ranboo says, relieved. There is the sound of shuffling, and then tense silence.

"Hey boob boy," Tommy says. Despite his jovial words, Ranboo can hear concern in his voice, clear as day. It's nice to be cared about.

"Hey Tommy," Ranboo replies with a tired smile.

There is silence for a few seconds, and then Tommy is speaking, rapid-fire and overly casual.

"Have I ever told you the story of the time Wilbur got his head stuck in the banister?" Tommy asks. Ranboo laughs at the premise alone, ignoring the offended squawk from Wilbur in the background.

"No, tell me," Ranboo says, eager for the distraction.

Tommy carries on like that for hours, telling stories and jokes and giving updates on how far they are from Ranboo. Every time they draw closer Ranboo feels the dread that had made a home in the pit of his stomach loosen. He is able to laugh when one of the other crewmates cuts into Tommy's stories to refute whatever outlandish lies the human had told.

He focuses on his breathing, he focuses on the fact that people are coming to get him. That he isn't going to die here.

Tommy tells him they are bare minutes away, and Ranboo swallows down a sob of relief. He reaches up to brush his face. There are smooth burns tracing down his cheeks. They're probably going to scar.

Ranboo leans his head out of the outcrop, just barely. He can see the looming shape of the SBI above the clouds. He whispers a short thank you to the Void. It has never been kind to him, but he's alive. That's enough, for now. He can air his grievances another time, on an easier day.

He watches the ship land. The ground trembles, but the ship doesn't. Forever sturdy, forever unwavering. The ramp lowers, and then a red-clad figure is rushing out. Tommy, of course, is the only one sent out. He's the most durable to the elements, and nature isn't kind on this planet. Ranboo watches Tommy's head whip around, looking for Ranboo. The enderian clears his throat, waving his arm, careful not to accidentally stick it out in the rain.

"Over here!" He calls. Tommy's gaze snaps to him, and then the human is running at him.

By all accounts, Ranboo should be terrified. There is a human running directly for him.

He's... *not*, though.

Tommy has been the one to keep him grounded throughout his time here, and he spent hours talking his voice raw just so Ranboo wouldn't be afraid. The ICA taught him that humans were to be feared, but the ICA also abandoned him here. The ICA taught bullshit.

Ranboo opens his arms.

Tommy slams into him, wrapping him in a clingy human hug, dropping the umbrella he had brought by their side. Tommy sways in place, burying his face in Ranboo's torso. Ranboo sets his chin on top of Tommy's head and closes his eyes.

He's okay.

Tommy lets go of him and gives him a tired smile.

"I'm glad you're okay, big man." He says. "I was half-sure you'd be a puddle by the time we got here." He holds out the umbrella to Ranboo.

"The rain doesn't *melt* me," Ranboo corrects, taking the umbrella and opening it. He steps out into the rain, shielded. "It *burns* me."

Tommy walks beside him, heedless of how soaked he is getting in the rain, content to let the umbrella protect Ranboo and leave himself vulnerable.

They make it back to the ship in one piece, and Ranboo scrambles up the ramp as quickly as his legs can carry him, eager to be off of this empty planet.

The crew is standing in the doorway, watching him worriedly. The moment he crosses the threshold and is safe from the rain, he is bombarded with worried questions. Ranboo is... *exhausted*. Perhaps more tired than he's ever been in his life. He can barely process what the crew is saying to him, let alone *respond* to them.

He lets them fuss, lets them cart him off to the medbay to put burn cream on his fresh injuries. He trusts them enough not to hurt him. It's a strange feeling. Trust has not been a luxury he has been able to enjoy in a long time.

Ranboo falls asleep while they bandage him up, and when he wakes, he's tucked into a blanket nest with the entire crew gathered around him. Tubbo and Tommy are both asleep, pressed into either side of him. Techno sits guard at the end of the bed, reading some thick tome. Wilbur plucks out soft music on his polivive. The lights are low and warm, and Ranboo is... okay.

He's okay.

A warm mug is pressed into his hand. Ranboo startles slightly, and looks up to see Techno looking at him, deadpan as always. If Ranboo squints he thinks he could see some warmth in his gaze too.

"What's this?" Ranboo asks, looking down at the mug. It's a deep brown liquid, steaming. There's a straw poking out of it.

"Tommy insisted we make you hot chocolate," Techno says quietly so as not to wake the others. "Of course, chocolate is poisonous to pretty much every species but humans, so we modified it. He says it tastes close enough."

Ranboo takes a sip. It's lovely.

"Thank you," He mutters. Techno nods and returns to his book. Ranboo turns his attention to Wilbur. "Where's Phil?" He asks.

"Had to run an errand," Wilbur answers simply. Ranboo hums, taking another sip of his drink.

"Where... where am I going to go?" Ranboo asks hesitantly. He doesn't know if things have changed since this morning, and the last thing he wants is to get his hopes up. Wilbur churrs in amusement, lashing his tail.

"You're staying here," He says, like it's obvious. Like it's the only answer there could be. "If you want to, of course."

"I do want to," Ranboo whispers into his drink. Wilbur smiles.

"I figured you would. Go to sleep, child. You've been through enough today."

Ranboo obeys, settling his head back against the stack of pillows he had been laid on.

He finishes his drink as he reclines, sipping it through his straw. It's really good, he can see why Tommy likes it. Even if the human version *is* highly poisonous.

Ranboo sets his mug down on the floor and curls into the blankets. He's sure to have some new scars based on the bandages that envelope him, but that is a problem for tomorrow. For now, he is warm and soft, and nothing hurts. His belly is full, and he's surrounded by people who will protect him.

He lets the tiredness drag him down into sleep, safe in the walls of the Sleepy Boi's Inc, tucked next to one of the galaxy's most fearsome predators.

He's okay.

Chapter End Notes

THATS IT FOR THE MAIN STORY WHOOO!!!!

now we just need to do an epilogue that wont be in Ranboo's pov, fun I know. then were done with this installment.

ill talk about what comes next in the final chapter, but for now, tell me what you think! If you liked this chapter, leave a comment! its the best way to get writing faster!

also, join the discord! The link is in the authors note below. you can get immediate notifications when this story updates!

Epilouge

Chapter Summary

steve harvey voice KILL

warnings:

-gore

-violnce

-killing and death and killing and stuff

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

It has been a long time since Philza has spilled blood. Even longer since the Angel of Death has taken his turn, but every drought must come to an end.

He had pulled Wilbur and Techno aside while Ranboo slept in the main body of the ship, telling them he was going to pay a visit to the Intergalactic Communications Academy, and that he would be back by morning.

It is clear in his voice what exactly he means by that, and his sons give him a somber nod.

"Keep the ship safe," He says to Technoblade, voice low in its anger. Techno rumbles an agreement, and Phil is confident that his ship will be safe without him for a few hours, under the watchful eye of his sole security guard.

He takes one of their smaller pods out, expertly navigating it to the space station where the ICA is located. He lands on the grounds, uncaring of the alarms that are surely already blaring at the presence of an unregistered craft.

Guards point guns at him as he exits, but Phil doesn't halt in his advances. He lunges forward, fast as the wind, wings open and terrifying in their size. He stretches out his talons, still kept sharp after all these years.

The guards are left bleeding out behind him as he walks towards the school, steps even and deliberate. He dispatches everyone who attempts to stop him. He has no mercy now, not when he has seen what they have done to those they have sworn to protect.

His talons click against the spotless linoleum floor, echoing off the walls. There has been a lack of guards since he's entered the building. Phil is willing to bet they had all holed up in an office somewhere. Cowards.

Phil does hope the students are being kept somewhere safe from his rage. He won't hurt them, he knows their uniforms from Ranboo, and they are not the target of his wrath. He still doesn't want them to see the aftermath of his work. They are far too young to be exposed to gore like that.

Phil continues his march to the dean's office. He knows his target.

There is the occasional security guard that tries to prove their valor by impeding him, but they are quickly killed. Phil has no mercy. What this school has done is unforgivable.

The bloody trail ends at a metal door. There is a name inscribed on it. Mx. Coatilt.

Phil tries to open it. It's locked, of course, but that only tells him that there are people inside. A locked door is no troubling adversary.

Phil brings his claws down on the control panel on the wall next to the door. The metal splits, revealing brightly colored wires. Phil grabs a handful and tugs. Sparks fly, but Phil doesn't flinch.

The door opens. Phil steps inside and kicks the door shut behind him.

It's dark, but Phil can see a group of administrative officials huddled in the back corner, staring at him like frightened animals. Phil does not smile.

"Hello." He says, taking another step forward. The crowd flinches. "I'm here to ask about one of your students."

"Whoever you want, you can take them," Someone sputters. "Please, just-"

"Yes, this is why I'm here." Phil muses with a frown. "Who said that?"

A body is shoved out from the crowd, a sniveling man, some species that Phil doesn't care to remember the name of. His ears are pressed back against his head, his skin a deep pink. He looks afraid.

He should be.

Phil wraps a clawed hand around the man's throat, pinning him to the wall. His feet dangle and his hands come up to try to loosen Phil's grip, but the elytrian is unwavering.

"What is your job here?" Phil asks steadily. The man doesn't answer, only whimpers slightly and continues his struggles. Phil shakes him.

"I- I'm a history teacher!" The man wails. Phil hums, displeased.

"You are a teacher, and yet you offer up your students in exchange for your own safety." Phil muses. The man snuffles. "Well, let's test your knowledge of the subject you teach, shall we?"

"The Angel of Death," Phil says, falsely casual. "What do you know about him?"

"A- A pirate," The teacher snuffles. "He- one of the most prolific ones... ever. He- he disappeared a while ago and- and he's assumed to be- be dead."

"Hm. Almost all right. One thing you got wrong, though." Phil says, disinterested. "He's not dead. It *has* been a while since my last outing, though."

Phil squeezes.

The other people gathered in the corner make horrified noises as the man dangling from Phil's grip thrashes and chokes, but then there is a snap when Phil's grip tightens further, and he goes limp.

Phil tosses him to the side, disinterested in his kill. One of the other administrators wails. Phil ignores them.

"Now, back to the topic at hand. I'm here to ask about a student of yours." Phil says. None of the crowd speaks, all staring at him with wide eyes. "Ranboo. Where is he?"

The crowd is silent for a while. Phil takes another step forward and someone cracks.

"He went missing!" They cry. "He wandered off while one of our pilots was refueling." Phil hums thoughtfully.

"Now isn't that a thought," He hums. "The thing is, you're lying."

The crowd goes completely silent. None of them even breathe.

"I got the strangest call earlier today," Phil says, sitting on the desk, eerily casual. "Ranboo was sobbing on the other end, telling me that he had been abandoned. That it was raining. That he was dying. Do you know how *terrifying* it is to have a child in your care sound that *desperate* ? To truly believe they are dying alone?"

"In your care...?" One of the teachers asks hesitantly. Phil chuckles darkly.

"Perhaps if you had sent a real inspector instead of a vulnerable student you would know who owns that ship," Phil says coldly. Someone gasps.

"You used him to further an end. Then you left him for dead." Phil says darkly. "This is unforgivable, as I'm sure you understand."

"You misunderstand- the pilot was refueling-"

"That's the thing," Phil says, scratching deep grooves into the wood of the desk. "I went to go get him. I was half sure he'd be dead by the time I arrived, but he wasn't. He lived, he was fine, if not a bit scared." Phil pauses. "That planet was empty. No refueling station anywhere. No people either. A great place to leave a child for dead."

Phil stares down at the crowd.

"Where is the dean?" He asks, tilting his head. Someone is shoved out from the crowd, cowering on the ground.

"Stand up." Phil orders. They do, hands shaking. Phil punches them across the face. Their glasses go flying across the room, and they stumble backward, holding their cheek.

" *You* are the one that ordered a vulnerable student to go inspect a ship that could have had any number of dangerous criminals on it. A ship where you had *already* sent another student." Phil chuckles darkly. "You refused to help him with his memory problems, you provided *no* accommodations, and if his story is to be believed, which I think it is, you also used interrogators as an attempt to get him to tell you how he unlocked his magic, a secret closely guarded by his entire species."

Phil stares down at the dean's quivering form.

"I am going to kill you now," He says, the dean screams, but Phil is already moving. He kicks them in the chest, a mirror of the way Ranboo had described being abandoned. Their head hits the wall, leaving a dark streak. They put their hands up to guard themselves, but it isn't going to stop Phil.

Phil spreads his wings as wide as they can go, false eyes practically glowing in the dim light of the office. He brings his talons down on the dean, gouging deep scratches in their face. They shriek, high and terrified like a wounded animal, but Phil doesn't stop.

"I am the Angel of fucking Death!" He growls as he brings his claws down again and again on the subject of his anger. "And *you* tried to kill my ward!"

Phil doesn't stop his attack until the dean stops twitching. Blue blood spills out in a wide puddle over the floor, sinking into the carpet. They're probably going to need to get the carpet replaced.

Phil stares at the crowd cowering at his feet. One of them is gagging at the blood.

"I am going to leave now," Phil tells them. There is a collective breath of relief, but Phil isn't done. " *But* I will be coming back every month. Not as the Angel of Death, but as a concerned benefactor. If I *ever* see *anything* like this again, I will kill every single one of you. Do you understand?"

There is a chorus of terrified agreement.

"Good," Phil says, turning around. "I'll see you all in a month."

He walks out of the school and back to his pod, which he lifts off the ground and flies back to where the SBI is docked. When he lands and reenters the ship, Techno is standing there staring at him with an unimpressed look. He holds out his holopad, an admittedly terrifying picture of Phil donning it. He stands over a dying guard, wings spread wide, claws dripping with blood.

'The Angel of Death Makes His Return!' the headline reads. Phil chuckles.

"A bit dramatic don't you think?" Phil says, crossing his arms. He winces at the stickiness of the half-dried blood.

"Go wash all the blood off you before you see any of the kids, they don't need to see any more gore for a lifetime," Techno says. Phil hums in agreement and makes his way to the bathroom, scrubbing the blood from his arms and feathers. It takes several hours and help from both Wilbur and Techno, but he is eventually clean. He is no longer the Angel of Death, he's just Phil again. A captain of a cargo ship, not a ruthless pirate.

Though if he ever catches wind of the ICA abusing its students, he has no problem returning to that title.

Chapter End Notes

So this is it for Ranboo's Interlude! The series isn't over yet, but I will be taking a break to write a bench trio werewolf fic, which I'm very excited for. I need a break from space, I'm going to FANTASY for a bit. Then back to space.

ANYWAY if you wanna see more of my writing subscribe to my page so you get notified whenever I post. Join the discord, check out my tumblr, yada yada.

If you liked this, leave a comment! I know it's over but I still love reading them!

End Notes

Thanks for reading! Nothing motivates me more than comments, so give!!!!!!

for real though, i have kept a relatively consistent upload schedule barring a few tradjedies, and that's all thanks to the INSANE amount of love I've received on this series, so keep it coming for more uploads !!

also, if you like this au, you can find some bonus content in the form of worldbuilding and fanart, both by myself and some other super cool people on my tumblr [CLICK HERE](#) to see that :]

just look for the tag 'human error'

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